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A

CALM INQUIRY

INTO

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

CONCERNING

THE PERSON OF CHRIST;

INCLUDING

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE CONTROVERSY
BETWEEN DR. HORSLEY AND
DR. PRIESTLEY,

AND

A SUMMARY OF THE VARIOUS OPINIONS
ENTERTAINED BY CHRISTIANS
UPON THIS SUBJECT.

BY THOMAS BELSHAM,

MINISTER OF THE CHAPEL IN ESSEX STREET.

"Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? quid Academiæ et Ecclesiæ?—Viderint qui stoicum Platonicum et dialecticum christianismum protulerunt. Nobis, curiositate opus non est post Christum Jesum, nec inquisitione post evangelium."

Tertullian.

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TO THE REVEREND MINISTERS,

FORMERLY PUPILS OF THE AUTHOR,

MANY OF WHOM NOW OCCUPY STATIONS OF EMINENCE

IN THE NONCONFORMIST CHURCHES,

FOR THE DIRECTION OF WHOSE STUDIES

THIS INQUIRY WAS ORIGINALLY INSTITUTED,

AND

TO THE YOUTH OF THE CONGREGATIONS

FIRST OF HACKNEY, AND AFTERWARDS OF ESSEX STREET,

FOR WHOSE INSTRUCTION

THE SUBJECT WAS DISCUSSED IN A MORE FAMILIAR FORM,

THIS TREATISE

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR FAITHFUL

AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

To those who interest themselves in the subject of this Inquiry, the order pursued in the following investigation may appear not altogether natural; and the Analytic method might perhaps be thought preferable to the Synthetic. And that method would unquestionably have been adopted, had the original design with which this Inquiry was instituted been to disprove the commonly-received doctrine concerning the deity of Jesus Christ.

But the truth is, that at the time when this Inquiry was begun the author was himself a firm believer in the pre-existence of Christ; and was fully persuaded that the spirit which animated the body of Christ was the eternal Logos asserted by Dr. Clarke; nor had he then altogether renounced the plausible hypothesis of Dr. T. Burnet and Dr. Doddridge, that the Son is God by the indwelling deity of the Father. He had been at that time, A. D. 1781, recently appointed to the Theological chair in Mr. Coward's Academy at Daventry, and Unitarianism being then "the great controversy of the age," he was dissatisfied with

the slight notice taken of this controversy in Dr. Doddridge's Lectures, which was the text-book of the Institution, and regarded it as an imperative professional duty to enter more fully into this important discussion, which had of late risen into increased celebrity, partly, by the controversial writings of Dr. Priestley, but chiefly, by the meritorious sacrifice which the venerable Theophilus Lindsey had made not many years before to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and by the new and singular phænomenon of a flourishing congregation of christians, avowedly Unitarian, having been formed under his auspices in Essex Street.

Now the plan, which to the author appeared most eligible for conducting the minds of his pupils in this Inquiry, was to form a collection of all the texts in the New Testament which in any way related to the person of Christ, and to arrange them under different heads, beginning with simple pre-existence, and advancing through the various intermediate steps to the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ. Under each text was introduced the comment of one or more learned and approved Trinitarian, Arian, or Unitarian expositors, in the commentator's own words, and in general without any additional, or at least doctrinal, comment of the

compiler's own, as it was his wish to leave the texts thus expounded to make their proper impression upon the minds of his pupils. Nor did he at that time entertain a doubt, that in the judgement of every serious and impartial inquirer, the result would be a clear discernment of what he then thought the superficial texture of the Unitarian arguments, and a confirmed conviction of the pre-existence, and superior nature and dignity, if not of the proper deity, of Jesus Christ.

The first consequence of this mode of conducting the lectures was to himself very unexpected, and not a little painful and mortifying. Many of his pupils, and of those some of the best talents, the closest application, and the most serious dispositions, who had also been educated in all the habits and prepossessions of Trinitarian doctrine, to his great surprise became Unitarians. This, however, he was disposed to attribute to the fickleness of youth, and to the caprice of fashion. As to himself, though he was at first struck with the small number of passages which he could discover, which explicitly taught the doctrine of our Lord's pre-existence, yet, being satisfied in his own mind that they were decisive upon the question, it was some time before the argu-

ments of the Unitarians made any considerable impression upon his mind: and his early opinions were too deeply rooted, and too intimately associated with the whole system of his religious feelings, to be easily abandoned. But being under the necessity of reviewing the subject from year to year, and at every review finding himself obliged to give up some posts as untenable, which were once deemed impregnable, he was at last compelled, though with great reluctance, to an entire surrender of the faith in which he had been educated concerning the person of Christ, and of adopting those opinions to which he certainly had no previous attachment, and the erroneousness of which he had once flattered himself he should easily have detected. Then, at length, he regarded it as his duty to speak out: and being no longer able to fulfill the design of his appointment, he resigned his office in January 1789 into the hands of Mr. Coward's Trustees, took leave of an affectionate congregation, and of a flourishing seminary of estimable pupils, and retired with no other expectation or prospect at the time, but that of passing the remainder of life in obscurity and silence.

Divine providence however ordained otherwise: and having, after a previous connexion

with the New College, been chosen to succeed Dr. Priestley in the congregation at Hackney, in the year 1794, he drew up the Lectures in a more popular form, still, however, retaining the original arrangement, and delivered them to the young people of that congregation, and afterwards to those who attended the chapel in Essex Street, to which he was appointed in the spring of 1805. Many in both these respectable societies expressed a desire of seeing them in print; with which request the author was the rather induced to comply, hoping that a review of the principal arguments upon the question might revive and confirm the impression made at the time. When, however, he came to revise the Lectures for the press, it occurred to him that the mere popular form into which the Lectures had been cast, in order to be delivered to a mixed audience, would hardly do justice to the subject; while that form in which they had been originally compiled for the use of professed theological students, would be too voluminous, and not adapted for common readers. He has therefore been at the trouble of recomposing the work, and of reducing it to such a form as he trusts will be generally intelligible to the unlearned reader, and not wholly unacceptable to the learned. Such as it is he com-

mends it to the candour of his readers and to the divine blessing. In the testimony of his conscience to the sincerity and impartiality with which he has himself sought after truth, and in the fidelity with which he has endeavoured to communicate information to others, the author rests perfectly satisfied. In what degree, and to what extent, his humble efforts may be honoured, as the means of contributing to the improvement of his fellow-creatures in knowledge and virtue, he willingly leaves to the Supreme Arbiter of events.

P. S. At the close of the First Part of this Inquiry it has been thought advisable to add a brief abstract of the controversy between Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley, concerning the doctrine of the primitive church, which it is hoped will at any rate *modify* the triumphant language which some zealots have lately used upon this subject; at least, if they have any regard to their literary or theological reputation, and do not altogether presume upon the ignorance and prejudices of their readers.

Hackney, March 22, 1811.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

Question stated, p. 1. Burden of proof lies upon those who maintain the pre-existence or divinity of Christ, p. 2. Unitarian doctrine needs no positive proof, p. 3. Preliminary observations, *ibid.* Profound learning not necessary in a mere question of fact, p. 5.

PART THE FIRST.

General distribution of the subject, p. 7.

SECTION I.

Whether the Jews expected a pre-existent Messiah, p. 10.

SECTION II.

Argument from the supposed miraculous Conception of Jesus.

The narratives in Matthew and Luke of doubtful authority, p. 12. The fact, if proved, would not infer the pre-existence of Jesus, p. 14.

SECTION III.

Texts which are conceived to express in the most direct and unequivocal Terms the Pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

Six out of the eight writers of the New Testament say little or nothing of the pre-existence of Christ, p. 15—not even the historians of his life and ministry, p. 16—not even Luke himself, who writes the history of the apostles' preaching and doctrine for upwards of thirty years, *ibid.* How this silence is accounted for by the ancients, p. 17. John, a figurative and mystical writer, p. 18. The pre-existence of Christ seldom alluded

to in the larger epistles of Paul, p. 19. Texts in favour of this doctrine very few in proportion; but their frequent citation makes them appear to be numerous and prominent, p. 20.

I. John i. 1—14, examined, p. 21. Different hypotheses concerning the Logos, *ibid.* The interpretation of Grotius adopted by many modern Unitarians proposed and examined, p. 24. That of the Polish Socinians stated and defended, p. 27. —II. John i. 15, examined, p. 39. Mr. Cappe's explanation approved, *ibid.*—III. John iii. 13, examined, p. 40. The local ascent of Christ into heaven after his baptism maintained by the Polish Socinians, p. 41. This hypothesis modified by Mr. John Palmer, p. 42. Explanation of Bishop Pearce and Archbishop Newcome, p. 43. 'To ascend into heaven' is to be acquainted with the purpose and will of God, p. 44. Proved by Grotius, Beza, Whitby, Doddridge, and, above all, by Raphelius, p. 45, *note.* 'To come down from heaven,' as the correlate phrase, properly signifies a commission to reveal the divine will, p. 47. Reflections upon this explanation of the text, p. 54.—IV. John iii. 31, explained, p. 55.—V. John vi. 25. 62, expounded, p. 56. The design of Jesus was to drive from his society those who followed him with selfish and secular views, p. 57. They first demand a sign from heaven like the manna, p. 58. Jesus promises true bread from heaven, meaning his doctrine, p. 59. The Jews, understanding him literally, eagerly desire this heavenly bread, *ibid.* Jesus declares that he is himself the bread from heaven, *ibid.* The Jews, knowing his extraction, are offended at his pretensions to a heavenly descent, p. 60. Jesus persists in declaring that he is the bread which they must actually eat to obtain immortality, p. 61. The Jews being still more confounded and offended, *ibid.*—Jesus insists in still stronger language upon the absolute necessity of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, p. 62. The Jews seem to suspect him of insanity, p. 64;—and Jesus having further intimated, as they conceived, that after his body had been thus consumed they should see him again return to heaven, his selfish followers, shocked at the apparent absurdity of his doctrine, abandon his society, p. 65. Jesus, in conclusion, declares that his whole discourse is to be taken figuratively and not literally, p. 68.—VI. John viii. 42, explained, p. 69.—VII. John viii. 58, explained, p. 70. Explanations of

Guyse, Sherlock, and Doddridge, p. 71. Origin of the popular mistake of the words *I AM*, p. 72. Arian interpretation, p. 74. Remarks of Dr. Clarke, Bishop Pearce, Dr. Harwood, and Dr. Price, p. 76. Singular interpretation proposed by the Polish Socinians, and revived in the Theological Repository, p. 81. Interpretation commonly received by the Unitarians, p. 85;—which best suits the connexion, p. 86;—and is justified by the language both of the Old Testament, p. 88,—and of the New, p. 92. Supported by Grotius, Beza, Hammond, Lardner, Cardale, Lindsey, Wakefield, Simpson, &c., p. 97. Reasons for insisting so much at large upon this celebrated text, p. 102.—VIII. John xiii. 3, explained, p. 103.—IX. John xvi. 28, explained, *ibid.*—X. John xvii. 5, explained, p. 105. Trinitarian interpretation, *ibid.* Arian interpretation, p. 106. Triumphant language of the Arians, p. 107. Unitarian interpretation, p. 109. Error of expositors concerning the nature of that glory for which Jesus prayed, *ibid.* This prayer explained, p. 110. The prolepsis justified, p. 113. Mr. Lindsey the only expositor who has given the true meaning of our Saviour's petition, p. 114. The proleptical interpretation supported by Grotius, by Wolzogenius from Augustin, by Le Clerc, Lardner, and others, p. 115.—XI. John xvii. 24, explained, p. 117. Strange interpretation of Dr. Guyse and Dr. Doddridge, *ibid. note.* Rational comment of Calvin and Campbell, *ibid.*—XII. 1 Cor. xv. 47, explained, p. 119. Singular interpretation of Crellius and the old Socinians, p. 120, *note.* Vulgate reading probably true, p. 121.—XIII. 2 Cor. viii. 9, explained, p. 121. No allusion to our Lord's pre-existence, p. 122. Judiciously omitted by Dr. Clarke, *ibid.* Triumphant language of Arians and Trinitarians, *ibid.* Riches and poverty of Christ simultaneous events, p. 124. In what sense Christ was both rich and poor, p. 125.—XIV. Eph. iv. 9, explained, p. 127.—XV. Philip. ii. 5—9, explained, p. 128. *Form of God* interpreted by Trinitarians, p. 130;—by Arians, *ibid.*;—high language of the Arians, p. 131. Interpretation of Grotius and the Unitarians, p. 132;—*equal with God* explained, p. 133. *Robbery* understood in an active sense by Calvin, Beza, Doddridge, and others, p. 134;—in a passive sense by Vatablus, Clarke, Wakefield, and the ancients, p. 135. Being in the *likeness* of men no proof that he was not a human being, p. 140. Recapitulation, p. 142.—XVI. Col. i. 15, explained, p. 145.

First-born how understood by Trinitarians, *ibid.*;—by Arians, p. 146;—by Grotius and the Unitarians, p. 147.—XVII. Col. i. 17, explained, p. 148.—XVIII. Rev. iii. 14, explained, p. 149. General reflections, p. 150.

SECTION IV.

Texts which, if they do not directly assert the Pre-existence of Christ, are thought to be most easily explained by that Hypothesis.

Recapitulation of phrases already explained, p. 152. Explanation of John vi. 46, p. 153. John viii. 14, *ibid.*;—ver. 23, *ibid.*;—ver. 38, p. 154. John xiv. 28, *ibid.* Trinitarian solutions of the Father's superiority, *ibid.* This text the strong hold of Arianism, p. 155. Unitarian interpretation, p. 156. Explanation of John xviii. 37, *ibid.* Rom. x. 6, p. 157. 1 Cor. x. 9, *ibid.* 1 Cor. x. 4, p. 158. Gal. i. 1, *ibid.* Heb. ii. 14, *ibid.* This text does not prove the assumption of human nature to be a voluntary act, p. 159. Heb. vii. 3, *ibid.* Imaginary analogy between Christ and Melchisedec, p. 160. Heb. xi. 26, p. 161. The reproach of Christ explained, *ibid.* Heb. xii. 25, 26, p. 162. Heb. xiii. 8, *ibid.* 1 Pet. i. 11, p. 163. 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20, p. 164. 'Spirits in prison' are the heathen world, *ibid.* 1 John i. 1, 2, p. 166;—parallel to John i. 1—14, *ibid.* 1 John iv. 2, p. 167;—'to come in the flesh' is to be a real man, p. 168. Rev. xxii. 16, p. 169.

SECTION V.

Attributes supposed to be ascribed to Christ which infer Pre-existence and Divinity.

Eternity, p. 171. Immutability, p. 172. Power to lay down and resume his life, p. 173. Irresistible power, p. 176. Omnipresence, p. 177. Omniscience, p. 179. Remarks, p. 184. Christ alone knows, and is known by, the Father, p. 186. Free from sin, p. 188. Remarks, p. 190. The perfect character of Christ proves the truth of the evangelical history, p. 191.

SECTION VI.

Alleged Superiority of Christ to Angels.

Preliminary remarks, p. 192. Various senses in which the

word *angel* is used in the Scriptures, p. 192. Existence of angels as a superior order of beings not a doctrine of revelation, nor to be traced in any book previously to the Babylonian captivity, p. 193. The senses in which Christ is represented as superior to angels, p. 196;—as a messenger of God, *ibid.*;—as a judge. *ibid.*;—and as the head of a new and superior dispensation. *ibid.* Texts cited, 199. Mark xiii. 32, triumphantly appealed to by the Arians, p. 200. How explained by Trinitarians, p. 201. Texts from the Epistles, p. 203. Heb. chap. i. explained, p. 205. Angels in this chapter uniformly signifies former prophets and messengers of God, *ibid.*

SECTION VII.

Titles and Characters attributed, or thought to be attributed, to Christ, which are supposed to imply Superiority of Nature.

I. Jehovah, p. 212. This title not given to Christ in the New Testament, p 213.—II. God, p. 214. Mr. Lindsey and others deny that this title is ever given to Christ, p. 215. "Partakers of a divine nature," a title applied to christians, but not to Christ. *ibid.* Matt. i. 23, Immanuel, does not prove that Christ is God, p. 216. Luke i. 16. 17, if genuine, not applied to Christ, p. 217. John i. 1, p. 218. John x. 33, Christ denies that he calls himself God, though, as a prophet, he might assume the title, *ibid.* John xx. 28, various interpretations of the exclamation of Thomas, p. 219. Acts xx. 28, 'Blood of God,' Dr. Doddridge thinks the phrase inspired, p. 220. Athanasius imputes it to the Arians, p. 221;—certainly spurious, *ibid.* Rom. ix. 5, 'God over all' not necessarily applicable to Christ, p. 222. Slichtingius's very plausible conjecture, p. 223. 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'God manifest in the flesh,' p. 225;—different readings of the original. *ibid.*;—the text never appealed to in the early stage of the Arian controversy, p. 226. Tit. ii. 13, p. 227. Contrary to the tenor of Scripture to speak of Christ as "the great God," *ibid.* Heb. i. 8, 'God is thy throne' the true sense of the text, p. 230. 2 Pet. i. 1, 'God' means 'the Father,' p. 231. 1 John iii. 16, the word 'God' an interpolation, *ibid.* 1 John v. 20, the pronoun *this* clearly refers to a remote antecedent, p. 232; otherwise Jesus Christ might be proved to be antichrist, p. 233.

Remarks, p. 234.—III. Christ *One* with God, p. 234; as his disciples are one with him, p. 235. 1 John v. 7, proved an interpolation, p. 236,—omitted in the best modern editions, p. 240; —and omitted or marked as doubtful in the earlier English versions, p. 241. Arguments in favour of the text stated and answered, *ibid.* Gibbon's account correct, p. 241, *note.* First cited, and probably forged, by Vigilius Tapsensis, p. 250.—IV. Equal with God, p. 251.—V. Fulness of Godhead, p. 252. —VI. The Son of God, p. 255. The Son, *ibid.* God his *own* Father, p. 256. The first-born, *i. e.* the first who rose to immortal life, p. 257. The beloved Son, *ibid.*;—*i. e.* chosen to peculiar privileges, p. 258. Only-begotten Son, *ibid.*:—a phrase peculiar to John, p. 259. Used by him where the other evangelists use beloved, *ibid.* The Son of God equivalent to the Messiah, p. 260.—VII. Christ the Image of God, p. 263. The effulgent ray of his glory, p. 264. No mysterious emanation of the Son intended by this metaphor. *ibid.*—VIII. Lord of glory, p. 267.—IX. Alpha and Omega, *ibid.* Rev. i. 10, 11, Dr. Doddridge lays great stress upon a clause now known to be spurious, p. 268.—X. Lord of all, p. 270. The Son and the Lord of David, p. 271.—XI. Prince or Leader of life, p. 272.—XII. Fills all in all, p. 273. Eph. i. 22, Christ the head supplies his body, the church, with all things needful, *ibid.*—XIII. A Saviour or Deliverer, p. 274.—XIV. King of kings, and Lord of lords, p. 275.

SECTION VIII.

Collection of Passages which are supposed to teach that Christ is the Maker and Preserver of all Things.

John i. 3, p. 276. Ver. 10, p. 277. 1 Cor. viii. 6, the new dispensation intended, *ibid.* Eph. iii. 9, the words "by Jesus Christ" an interpolation, p. 278. Col. i. 15—18, explained, p. 279. Unitarian interpretation censured by Arians and Trinitarians, p. 280. Christ never represented as creator of natural objects, p. 281. The apostle details not *things*, but *states* of things, *ibid.*;—creation sometimes signifies only a change of state, p. 282;—*things* often used for *persons*, p. 284;—*heaven* and *earth* sometimes express political and moral distinctions, p. 285. When *heaven* is used to express a moral dispensation, the supposed orders of the celestial hierarchy express the ministers and

officers of that dispensation, p. 286. The passage explained upon these principles, p. 287. Heb. i. 2, 3, explained, p. 290. The word αιων never signifies 'worlds' but 'ages,' *ibid.* Dr. Sykes's interpretation, p. 291. That of Slichtingius and the old Socinians, *ibid.* Grotius's interpretation proposed and defended, p. 293. Heb. i. 10, addressed to the Father, p. 294. Heb. iii. 4, irrelevant to the subject, p. 295. Rev. iii. 14, Christ the head and chief of the new creation, *ibid.* Remarks, p. 296. If it had been the design of the sacred writers to teach that Christ was the Creator of all things, it would have been easy to have expressed the doctrine clearly and unambiguously, p. 297. Had the doctrine been true, it could not have been omitted by the historians of his life and ministry, p. 298.

SECTION IX.

Whether Jesus Christ was the Medium of the Divine Dispensations to the Patriarchs, and to the Hebrew Nation, and whether he ever appeared under the Name and Character of Jehovah.

This doctrine probably the invention of Justin Martyr, p. 301, *note.* The doctrine of two Jehovahs plainly inconsistent with the Jewish Scriptures, p. 302. Arguments examined and confuted, *ibid.* Hebrew idiom mistaken, p. 303. Jehovah, and the Angel of Jehovah, the same person, p. 306. Chaldee paraphrasts give no countenance to the doctrine of two Jehovahs, p. 308. No proof that the Jehovah-angel animated the body of Christ, p. 310.

SECTION X.

The present Exaltation of Christ, the high Offices which he now sustains, or to which he is to be appointed hereafter, are said to be incompatible with the Supposition of his proper and simple Humanity.

I. His universal government, p. 315. Matt. xxviii. 18, considered, *ibid.* How understood by Trinitarians and Arians, *ibid.* Strange hypothesis of the Polish Socinians concerning the universal government of Christ, p. 317. Unitarian interpretation, p. 318. Dr. Priestley understands it of some personal dignity,

p. 319. Mr. Lindsey, more correctly, of the moral influence of the Gospel, *ibid.*

II. Christ personally present with his disciples, p. 323. Matt. xxviii. 20, considered, *ibid.* The promise only extends to the apostolic age, p. 324. Facts accounted for by this interpretation, p. 325. Intercession of Christ explained, p. 327. In what sense Christ forgives sin, p. 329. 'Sinner' often equivalent to 'Heathen,' and does not always imply guilt, p. 330.

III. Christ appointed to raise the dead, p. 332. 1 Cor. xv. 22, proves the proper humanity of Christ, p. 333. Mr. Tyrwhit's judicious observations, *ibid.* Christ raises the dead by his Father's power, p. 335.

IV. Christ appointed to the office of universal judge, p. 335. Matt. xxv. 31, &c. understood, by some, of the destruction of Jerusalem, p. 336. Many texts assert the judicial office of Christ, p. 337, &c. Hence many reflecting persons have inferred his superior nature, p. 340. But the Scriptures attribute this office to him as a *Man*, p. 341. They represent the apostles and all christians as assessors with Christ in this office, p. 342. Events often different from what the language of prophecy leads to expect, p. 343. Prophets said to perform what they only predict, p. 344. This principle may perhaps apply to the judgement of the world by Jesus Christ, p. 345;—countenanced by our Lord's expressions, John xii. 48, p. 346. Advantages of this hypothesis, p. 347.

SECTION XI.

Concerning the Worship of Jesus Christ.

Religious worship and idolatry defined, p. 349. Christian idolatry distinguished from Heathen, p. 350. Socinian worship of Christ exploded, p. 351. Modern Arians abandon the worship of Christ, and hence claim the title of Unitarians, *ibid.* Christ said to be the object of religious regard, p. 352;—of faith, *ibid.*;—of love, p. 354. Love to Christ not a personal affection, p. 355. Committing the care of the soul to Christ, p. 358. Great mistake of Dr. Doddridge and others upon this subject, p. 359. Christians live to Christ, p. 360. External homage paid to Christ while on earth, *ibid.*;—this no more than civil respect, p. 361. John v. 23, explained, *ibid.* Baptism to

baptized into the name of Christ, p. 362. Form of baptism no proof of Christ's equality or unity with the Father, p. 363. Angels required to worship Christ, p. 364. Every knee to bow at his name, p. 365. Adjuration by him, *ibid.* Appealed to as a witness, p. 366. Christians described as those who invoke his name, *ibid.* Dependence on his direction and blessing, p. 367. Doxologies addressed to Christ, p. 368. Thanksgivings to him, p. 370. Prayer to Christ, p. 373. Devout wishes of blessings from him, p. 375;—not to be confounded with prayers, *ibid.*

SECTION XII.

Direct Arguments for the proper Humanity of Jesus Christ.

Not necessary to the validity of the Unitarian doctrine, p. 379.—1. The total silence of three evangelists, p. 380. How accounted for by Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others, *ibid. note.* —2. Pre-existence and divinity of Christ not expressly taught in the New Testament, p. 381.—3. Great difficulties upon the supposition that this fact was revealed during our Lord's personal ministry, p. 383. Still greater difficulties upon the supposition that it was not then known, p. 385.—4. Christians not charged with polytheism by the Jews in the apostolic age, p. 387.—5. Christ in the most unqualified language styled a *Man* after his ascension, p. 389. An angel incarcerated in a human body not properly a man, p. 390.—6. Jesus often calls himself the Son of Man, p. 391. Remarks upon this phrase, *ibid.*—7. Christ appeared as a man, with all the incidents and infirmities of human nature, and was universally regarded as such by his contemporaries, p. 393.—8. The writer to the Hebrews asserts and argues that he was a mere man, and could not be a being of superior nature, p. 396.

9. The great body of primitive christians for the two first centuries and upwards were believers in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ, p. 398. This fact of high importance, and fully established by Dr. Priestley, p. 399. The proper humanity of Christ must be the first impression upon the primitive converts, *ibid.*;—and must have continued till John wrote his Gospel, *ibid.* Nor is there any proof that the writings of this evangelist produced any sudden change of opinions on this subject, p. 401. The

Unitarians always maintained that their doctrine was the prevailing belief till the time of Victor, A. D. 200, p. 403. That the *Jewish* christians were in general Unitarians, is proved by their not being excommunicated, *ibid.*;—by the concessions and the moderate language of Justin Martyr, p. 404;—by the direct testimony of Origen, p. 406;—confirmed by Eusebius, p. 407. No distinction upon this subject between Nazarenes and Ebionites, *ibid.* Dr. Horsley constrained to concede this point to Dr. Priestley, p. 408, *note.* No foundation for the hypothesis of an orthodox Jewish church at Ælia, p. 410. That the great body of *Gentile* christians were Unitarians, attested by Origen, p. 413;—and most explicitly by Tertullian, p. 414. Dr. Horsley's extraordinary method of repelling Tertullian's testimony, p. 416. Testimony of Athanasius to the Unitarianism of the Gentile church, p. 418;—and of Jerome, p. 419, *note.* Conclusion, *ibid.*

APPENDIX TO SECT. XII.

Abstract of the Controversy between Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley concerning the Existence of a Church of orthodox Hebrew Christians at Ælia.

Origen's assertion stated by Dr. P., p. 422;—contradicted by Dr. H., who charges Origen with wilful falsehood, and asserts the existence of a Hebrew orthodox church at Ælia, a colony established by Adrian after the demolition of Jerusalem, *ibid.* Dr. P. consults the wrong reference, p. 424. Charges the archdeacon with making additions to Mosheim, p. 425;—denies the existence of the Hebrew church at Ælia, *ibid.*;—and accuses Dr. H. of being a falsifier of history, and defamer of the dead, p. 426.

The archdeacon resents the charge, p. 427;—acknowledges that he borrowed every thing from Mosheim, *ibid.*;—and retorts upon Dr. P., *ibid.* Sets himself to prove the fact he had asserted in seven propositions, p. 428;—the three first acknowledged facts, but nothing to the purpose, *ibid.*:—the three next are gratuitous and improbable assumptions, *ibid.*;—the seventh proposition argued from the testimony of Jerome, p. 430. Dr. H.'s extraordinary mode of bringing Jerome's testimony to bear upon the question, p. 431;—acknowledges that his argument rests

chiefly upon his six propositions, p. 432;—which only *assume* the fact to be proved, *ibid.* Dr. H.'s bold conclusion, *ibid.*;—not warranted by his premises, p. 433.

Dr. H. asserts the migration of the Jewish christians from Pella to Ælia, in order to enjoy the immunities of Adrian's colony, p. 433;—appeals to Epiphanius's testimony to the fact, *ibid.*;—who mentions the return of the christians after the war of Titus 60 years before, p. 434;—the archdeacon deprecates chronological objections, *ibid.*;—these christians must have been fourscore years of age when they returned to Ælia, p. 433. Aquila, surveyor of Adrian's works, converted by them, bears testimony to their activity and zeal, p. 435. Another chronological difficulty, p. 436. Aquila's conversion was before Adrian's war broke out, *ibid.* Dr. H., now a bishop, complains of the trouble his opponent gives him by his chronological objections, *ibid. note*;—believes that the Hebrew christians who abandoned the Mosaic ritual were not banished by Adrian, *ibid.*;—but forgets to provide for them in the interval between the destruction of Jerusalem and the building of Ælia, p. 437, *note*;—or to reconcile this supposition with the facts before alleged, as the foundation of his charge against Origen, p. 437. His lordship wishes to trust the church of Ælia to herself against future attacks, p. 438.

Dr. P. maintains that his lordship's assumptions are contradicted by the clearest facts. *ibid.*;—laughs at his lordship's protest against chronological objections, *ibid.*;—declares the church of Trinitarian Jews to have fallen upon the head of its founder, p. 439;—and gives the bishop a spirited challenge to resume the controversy, *ibid.*;—which his lordship prudently forbears to accept, *ibid.*:—and both parties retire equally well satisfied with the result, *ibid.*

NOTE TO THE APPENDIX.

Dr. Horsley triumphantly appeals to Barnabas's testimony to prove the early orthodoxy of the Hebrew church, p. 440. Dr. Priestley's reply, *ibid.* Jeremiah Jones's estimate of the value of Barnabas's testimony, p. 441. Dr. H., sensible of the weakness of his argument from the church of Ælia, endeavours to bolster up his charge against Origen by two citations from his

Reply to Celsus, p. 442;—both charges unfounded and trifling, *ibid.* Dr. P.'s severe remark, p. 444. Dr. H. misled by Mosheim: and having brought the charge, thought himself bound to support it, *ibid. note.* Little reason for the Quarterly Reviewers to compliment Dr. H. upon his triumph, *ibid.*;—or to represent Theology as his *forte*, *ibid.* Strictures upon observations relating to the Unitarians in a late Quarterly Review, *ibid.* Dr. H.'s illiberal reflections upon Dr. P., p. 447. Dr. P.'s reply, p. 448.

PART THE SECOND.

A Summary View of the various Opinions which have been entertained concerning the Person of Christ; with the Arguments for, and Objections against, each.

Sect. I. Proper Unitarian Scheme, p. 447;—the doctrine stated, *ibid.* Reasons why they assume the title of Unitarians, p. 455. Arguments for the Unitarian doctrine, *ibid.* Objections urged, p. 460. Reply, p. 464. Arians, who believe Christ to be the Maker and Governor of the world, not properly Unitarians, p. 474.—Sect. II. The Socinian Scheme stated, p. 475. Objections against it, p. 479.—Sect. III. Low Arian Scheme, p. 481;—opposed, p. 483.—Sect. IV. High Arian Scheme stated, p. 485. Argument in favour of it, p. 489. Objections against it, p. 491. Objections against limited Arianism, p. 494.—Sect. V. Semi-Arian Scheme stated, p. 496. Arguments in its favour, p. 497. Objections, p. 498.—Sect. VI. The Indwelling Scheme stated, p. 500. Arguments and objections, p. 501.—Sect. VII. Sabellian Scheme, p. 504.—Sect. VIII. Swedenborgian Doctrine, p. 505.—Sect. IX. Tritheism, p. 507.—Sect. X. Trinitarian Doctrine, p. 508. Arguments in favour of the Deity of Christ, p. 509. Objections, p. 510.—Hypothesis of the Realists, p. 517—of the Nominalists, p. 519.—Proper Athanasian Scheme, p. 521.—Remarks, p. 523.—Remarks upon those who adopt Scripture language declining all explanation, p. 526.

TEXTS

COMMENTED UPON AND EXPLAINED.

MATTHEW.

Ch.	Page
i. 23	216
iii. 17	257
ix. 2	329
— 4	179
xi. 27..54, 186,	255
xii. 18	258
— 25	179
xiii. 40, 41	199
xvi. 27	199
xvii. 5	258
xviii. 20	177
xxi. 25	49
xxii. 41—46	271
xxv. 31, &c.	199, 336
xxviii. 9	360
—— 17	361
—— 18.. 176,	315
—— 19	362
—— 20.. 178,	323

MARK.

Ch.	Page
i. 1	255, 261
ii. 7	329
— 10, 11	331
viii. 38	199
xiii. 26, 27	200
—— 32	200
xvi. 12	129

LUKE.

Ch.	Page
i. 16, 17	217
iii. 27	261
iv. 41	261
v. 22	179
vii. 39, 40	180
— 48	330
ix. 26	336
— 46, 47	180
x. 22	186
xxii. 67	261
xxiv. 52	361

JOHN.

Ch.	Page
i. 1—14.. 21, 258, 276,	218, 277
— 15	39
— 18	53, 258
— 33—34	261
— 50	261
ii. 19—21	173
-- 24, 25	179
iii. 12	67
— 13	41
— 16	258
— 18	258
— 31	55
iv. 25	180
— 29	180
v. 18.... 251,	256
— 23	361
— 26, 27	336
— 28, 29	332
vi. 25, 66.. 56,	&c.
— 46	153
— 56	18
— 64	181
vii. 27	10
viii. 14	153
—— 23	153
—— 38	154
—— 42	69
—— 46	188
—— 58	70
ix. 2	329
x. 17, 18	173
— 30	234
— 33	218
xii. 34	393
— 39 41,	212
— 47, 48	346
xiii. 3	103
—— 13	270
xiv. 7	386
—— 9—11	187
—— 13, 14	326
—— 21	354
—— 28	154
xvi. 28	103
—— 28—30	181
xvii. 5	105
—— 24	117
xviii. 33	321
—— 37	156
xx. 23	330
— 28	219
— 31	261
xxi. 17	182

ACTS.

Ch.	Page
i. 11	337
iii. 14	188
— 15	272
v. 31. 272, 274,	332
vii. 52	188
— 59	373
ix. 14	366
x. 36	271
xvii. 31	338
xx. 28	220

ROMANS.

Ch.	Page
i. 3, 4	262
i. 7	377
viii. 29	257
—— 32	256
—— 34	327
ix. 1	366
— 5	222
x. 6	157
— 9	352
xiv. 9	272

1 CORINTHIANS.

Ch.	Page
i. 2	367
ii. 8	267
viii. 6	277
x. 4	158
– 9	157
xii. 10	185
xv. 21	333
— 24—27	321
— 28	256
— 47	119
xvi. 22	354

2 CORINTHIANS.

iii. 16	263
iv. 4	263
— 14	334
v. 14	360
– 21	189
viii. 9	121
xii. 8, 9	374
xiii. 14	377

GALATIANS.

i. 1	158
iv. 14	203

EPHESIANS

i. 20, 21	204
– 22, 23	273
iii. 9	278
iv. 9	127
v. 19, 20	370
– 30	19

PHILIPPIANS.

ii. 5—9 ...	128, &c.
– 6	252
– 10	365
– 19	367
iii. 21	176, 334
iv. 13	328

COLOSSIANS

i. 1..5—18.	279, &c.
– 15	145
– 17	148
– 18	257

Ch.	Page
ii. 3	182
– 9	252
– 10	205
iii. 10, 11	273

1 THESSALON^{s}.

iv. 16	334
v. 27	365

2 THESSALON^{s}

i 7	205
ii. 16, 17	377

1 TIMOTHY.

i. 2	377
– 12	370
ii. 5	389
iii. 16	225
vi. 20	359

2 TIMOTHY.

i. 11, 12	358
– 14	359
iv. 17, 18	368

TITUS.

ii. 13	229

HEBREWS.

i. 2, 3	289
– 3	264
– 6	257
– 4—9	205
– 8—10	294
– 8	230, 256
– 10	213
– 10—12	172
– 13, 14	208
ii. 2, 3	210
– 5—18.	396, &c.
– 10	272
– 14	158
– 18	328
iii. 3, 4	295
iv. 12, 13	183
vii. 3	159
— 26	189
— 28	256
xi. 3	27

Ch.	Page
xi. 26	161
xii. 2	273
— 25, 26	162
xiii. 8	162
—— 20, 21	369

JAMES.

ii. 1	267
v. 6	189

1 PETER.

i. 8	355
– 11	163
ii. 21, 22	190
iii. 18	190
— 19, 20	164
— 22	210

2 PETER.

i. 1—	231
iii. 13	369

1 JOHN.

i. 1—5	28, 166
iii. 5	190
— 16	231
iv. 2	167
— 9	259
v. 1	352
– 7, 8	236, &c.
– 20	232

2 JOHN.

ver. 7	233

REVELATIONS.

i. 5	257
– 5, 6	369
– 8	177, 267
– 10, 11	268
– 17, 18	269
ii. 2	183
– 23	183
iii. 10	190
— 14	149, 295
v. 8—14	371
xvii. 14	275
xxii. 13	269
—— 16	169, 211

AN

INQUIRY

INTO

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

CONCERNING

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

INTRODUCTION.

THREE principal hypotheses have been maintained concerning the person of Jesus Christ. 1. That Jesus of Nazareth is a proper human being, the greatest of all the prophets of God. 2. That a pre-existent created spirit of a higher or lower degree in a supposed celestial hierarchy animated the body of Jesus. 3. That the divine nature, or a divine person, was so united to the human body and soul of Jesus as to form one person, who is both truly God, and truly man.

The first of these is the doctrine of the Unitarians; the second is that of the Arians; and the third is that of the Trinitarians.

All Christians agree that Jesus of Nazareth

was to outward appearance a man like other men: and that though he was an inspired prophet, who performed miracles, was raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven, he is not, on these accounts solely, to be regarded as a being of rank superior to the human race, but that separate and direct evidence is necessary for the establishment of this specific fact.

Hence it follows that, in this inquiry, *the whole burthen of proof lies upon those who assert the pre-existence, the original dignity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ.*

If any one affirm that a being who has every appearance, and every incident and quality of a man, is not a real man, but a being of an order superior to mankind, it is incumbent upon him to prove his assertion. If he fail in his proof, his hypothesis vanishes, and the person in question must be regarded as a real man.

It is therefore by no means necessary for the Unitarian to adduce proof of the proper simple humanity of Jesus Christ. It would be equally reasonable to demand of the Jews a demonstration of the proper humanity of Moses. If the Arian or Trinitarian doctrines be not satisfactorily proved by direct and specific evidence, the Unitarian doctrine must be received as true. For

who is so unreasonable as to require evidence to prove a man to be a man?

In this controversy, therefore, the proper province of the Arian and Trinitarian is to propose the evidence of their respective hypotheses; that is, to state those passages of Scripture which they conceive to be conclusive in favour of their doctrines. *The sole concern of the Unitarian is to show that these arguments are inconclusive:* that the passages in question are either of doubtful authenticity, or misunderstood, or misapplied.

This is the precise state of the question. It is admitted by all parties. It must be continually kept in view.

This view of the subject points out the true and only proper method of conducting the argument. It is by proposing and carefully examining the controverted texts. He who will not submit to this labour must be content to remain ignorant, or to take his opinions upon trust.

The following observations may be of use to guide our inquiries.

1. If Jesus or his apostles peremptorily and unequivocally declare the doctrine of his pre-existence and original dignity, their evidence must without hesitation be admitted. They could not be mistaken.

2. Nevertheless, when a fact is contrary to the established order of Nature, and the antecedent improbability is very great, the direct evidence must be proportionably strong. The doctrine of the pre-existence and high original powers of Christ ought not to depend upon a few obscure, mystical, and ambiguous texts.

3. In examining the validity of an argument from Scripture, the first inquiry is, whether the text be genuine; the second is, to ascertain its true import, and the correctness of its application.

4. In order to judge of the true sense of a disputed text, it is necessary to consider the connexion in which it stands; the scope and design of the writer; the customs and modes of thinking which prevailed in the age and country in which the author wrote; his own turn of mind and peculiar phraseology, and whether he means to be understood literally or figuratively. Also, similar passages and forms of expression must be compared with each other, so that what is obscure and doubtful may be illustrated by what is clear and intelligible.

5. Impartial and sincere inquirers after truth must be particularly upon their guard against

what is called the natural signification of words and phrases. The connexion between words and ideas is perfectly arbitrary; so that the natural sense of a word to any person, means nothing more than the sense in which he has been accustomed to understand it. But it is very possible that men who lived two thousand years ago might annex very different ideas to the same words and phrases; so that the sense which appears most foreign to us, might be most natural to them.

6. It ought by all means to be remembered, that profound learning and acute metaphysical subtilty are by no means necessary to settle the important question concerning the person of Christ. The inquiry is into a plain matter of fact, which is to be determined like any other fact by its specific evidence, the evidence of plain unequivocal testimony; for judging of which, no other qualifications are requisite than a sound understanding and an honest mind. Who can believe that the decision of the great question whether Jesus of Nazareth is the true God, and the Creator and Governor of the world, depends upon a critical knowledge of the niceties of the Greek Article? With equal reason might it be maintained, that no person can know any thing of the History of Greece,

who is not perfect in the metres of the Greek dramatic writers[1].

7. Inquiry to be useful must be impartial. The mind must be kept open to conviction, and ready to follow evidence whithersoever it leads; to sacrifice prejudices the most deeply rooted and the most fondly cherished, and to embrace truths the most unexpected and unwelcome. Truth must ultimately be favourable to virtue and to happiness.

The subject is divided into Two Parts. The First contains A Selection and Examination of those Passages in the New Testament which have been alleged in favour of the Pre-existence and original Dignity, Power, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Second Part comprehends A summary View of the various Hypotheses which have been formed concerning the Person of Christ, and of the Arguments for and against each Hypothesis respectively.

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[1] Who ever heard of a juryman being challenged because he was not a good grammarian? Can no one know that Gustavus is banished from his throne, who is not able to read the instrument of his deposition in the original language? The incarnation of a God, the incarceration of the Creator of the world in the body of a helpless puling infant is a fact, the credit of which must rest, like that of all other facts, not upon grammatical subtilties, but upon evidence direct, presumptive, or circumstantial, upon the validity of which every person of common sense is competent to decide.

PART THE FIRST.

SELECTION AND EXAMINATION OF THOSE PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH HAVE BEEN ALLEGED IN FAVOUR OF THE PRE-EXISTENCE, THE ORIGINAL DIGNITY, POWER, AND DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION.

THESE passages will be arranged under the following heads.

I. The arguments which are alleged to prove that the Jews in the time of Christ believed in the pre-existence of their expected Messiah.

II. The narratives of the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus Christ.

III. The texts which are conceived to express in the most direct and unequivocal language the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

IV. The texts which, if they are not to be admitted as direct arguments, are nevertheless thought to be most correctly interpreted as alluding to this important fact.

V. Those in which attributes appear to be ascribed to Christ, which are thought to establish his pre-existence, and by many even his divinity.

VI. Those passages which are understood as affirming the superiority of Christ to angels.

VII. Those passages which ascribe Names, Titles, and Characters to Christ, which are supposed to infer great original dignity in a pre-existent state, and by many to prove his supreme divinity.

VIII. Those which are supposed to teach that Christ is the Maker, Supporter, and Governor of all things.

IX. Those passages from which it is inferred that Christ was the Medium of the divine dispensations to mankind, antecedently to his supposed incarnation, and particularly of the dispensations of di-

vine providence to the patriarchs, and to the Jewish nation.

X. Those which express the exaltation to which Christ is advanced, and the offices with which he is now or will hereafter be invested, and which it is argued are incompatible with the supposition of his proper humanity.

XI. The passages which require or exemplify homage and worship to be offered to Christ, to which it is conceived that no creature, at least no man however exalted, can be entitled.

This part will close with

XII. A selection of passages from the New Testament to prove, if it were necessary, the inferiority and proper humanity of Jesus Christ.

SECTION I.

THAT THE JEWS EXPECTED A PRE-EXISTENT MESSIAH.

ONE text only is alleged with any plausibility in favour of this supposition.

John vii. 27. "We know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."

Grotius and Doddridge explain this passage as alluding to the miraculous conception of Jesus.

Dr. Whitby more justly understands it as referring to a tradition among the Jews, that the Messiah was to be conveyed from Bethlehem soon after his nativity, and to be concealed from the world till Elias came to anoint him.

It is said that some of the modern Cabalists maintain that the angel Metatron, who led the Israelites in the wilderness, will be the soul of the Messiah. But it is notorious that the ancient Jews, and indeed the Jewish nation in general, in all ages entertained no

such expectation. Trypho the Jew, in his Dialogue with Justin Martyr early in the second century, represents the notion of the pre-existence and incarnation of Jesus, as not only wonderful, but silly: and he reproaches the Christians for their belief in the miraculous conception of Christ, which he ridicules as a fiction equally absurd with that of Jupiter and Danäe. He says, that all his nation expect the Messiah to be a man born like other men.

Justin Martyr Opp. Edit. Thirlby, p. 233—6. Dr. Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions, vol. iii. p. 30—40. Ben Mordecai's (H. Taylor's) Lett. vol. i. p. 359—61.

SECTION II.

ARGUMENT FROM THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE narrative of this event is contained in the two first chapters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke. And the miraculous birth of Christ is regarded by many as a considerable presumptive evidence of his pre-existence. But,

1. The narrative itself is of very doubtful authority.

The Ebionite gospel of Matthew and the Marcionite gospel of Luke did not contain these accounts: and both those sects maintained their own to be the uncorrupted, unmutilated copies of these evangelical histories.

From Luke iii. 1, compared with ver. 23, it appears that Jesus was born fifteen years before the death of Augustus, that is at least two years after the death of Herod; a fact which completely falsifies the whole narrative contained in the preliminary chapters of Matthew and Luke.

If the relation given of the miraculous con-

ception were true, it is utterly unaccountable that these extraordinary events should have been wholly omitted by Mark and John, and that there should not be a single allusion to them in the New Testament; and particularly, that in John's history, Jesus should be so frequently spoken of as the son of Joseph and Mary, without any comment, or the least hint that this statement was erroneous.

The Ebionites, who were Hebrew and Unitarian Christians, and the Gnostics, who were philosophizing Gentile believers, who differed from each other in almost every other opinion concerning the person of Christ, agreed in disbelieving the miraculous conception. There was nothing in the peculiarities of these sects which should render them averse to this opinion. Both would naturally have been pleased with any circumstance which would have exalted the dignity of the founder of their faith: but both these sects had their origin in the apostolic age, and had probably at that time never heard the report.

Also, if the facts related in the account of our Lord's nativity were true; *viz.* the appearances of angels, the star in the East, the visit of the Magi, the massacre of Bethlehem, &c. they

must have excited great public attention and expectation, and could not have failed to have been noticed by contemporary writers, who nevertheless observe a total silence on the subject.

2. The miraculous conception of Jesus would no more infer his pre-existence, than the miraculous formation of our first parents, or the miraculous conception of Isaac, of Sampson, of Samuel, and of John the Baptist, would prove that these persons had an existence before they came into this world, and were beings of a superior order to the rest of mankind[1].

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[1] See upon this subject Dr. Priestley's History of Early Opinions, vol. iv. book iii. chap. 20. Also the Notes, in the Improved Version of the New Testament, on Prefaces of Matthew and Luke.

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or

SECTION III.

TEXTS EXAMINED WHICH ARE CONCEIVED TO EXPRESS IN THE MOST DIRECT AND UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

The writers of the New Testament are commonly reckoned eight. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude. Of these writers six, *viz.* Matthew, Mark, Luke, James, Peter, and Jude, are generally allowed to have advanced nothing upon the subject of the pre-existence, and superior nature and dignity of Jesus Christ. At least it will be admitted that, if there be any allusions in these writers to this extraordinary fact, they are so faint and obscure that, independently of the rest of the New Testament, they would not of themselves have proved, perhaps not even suggested the idea of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ. The credit of these facts depends wholly upon the testimony of John and Paul.

Of the six writers who make no mention of

the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus Christ, three are professed historians of the life, the miracles, and the doctrine of Christ; and one continues his history to upwards of thirty years after our Lord's ascension; and relates many interesting particulars of the lives, the sufferings, and the doctrine of the apostles, the subjects of their preaching, the miracles which they performed, and the success of their mission. But neither the history nor the discourses of Christ, nor those of his apostles for thirty years after his ascension, contain the least hint of his pre-existent state and dignity.

But how can this total silence be explained and accounted for, if the popular doctrine concerning the pre-existence and divinity of Christ is true? Is it credible, or even possible, that three persons, in different places and at different times, should undertake to write the history of Christ, each meaning to communicate all that was necessary to be known, with their minds fraught with the overwhelming idea that the person whose history they were about to write was a superior Being, a great angel, the Creator of the world, or the Almighty God himself in human shape, and that the belief of this great mystery was necessary to the salvation of their

readers; and yet through the whole of their narrative should abstain from mentioning or even glancing at this stupendous fact? How would a modern Arian or Trinitarian have acted in similar circumstances? Would he have left his readers under the impression which necessarily results from the perusal of the three first evangelical histories and that of the Acts, *viz.* that the founder of the christian faith was a man like to his brethren, and only distinguished from them as the greatest of the prophets of God, who had been raised from the dead and exalted to the right-hand of the Most High?—That six of the writers of the New Testament should have observed such a profound silence upon a subject of which their hearts must have been so full, and with which their imagination must have been so overpowered, may well induce a considerate mind to pause, and to reflect whether this could have happened if Jesus of Nazareth were in truth a being of high, perhaps the highest order in the universe?

Athanasius, Chrysostom and others accounted for this extraordinary silence from the great prudence of the evangelists, and their unwillingness to give offence to the new converts; but this

is a supposition which will not now satisfy an inquisitive mind[1].

The evidence therefore of the pre-existence and superior dignity of Christ must rest upon the testimony of John and Paul. And if it appears that these apostles were authorized to supply the defects of their predecessors, and that their testimony to the received doctrine is clear and unequivocal, it must without doubt be admitted.

But observe, they never declare nor hint that they were authorized to teach any new doctrine concerning the person of Christ: nor do they lay down any such doctrine to be received as an article of faith. If they say any thing upon the subject, it is in an incidental way, and not as if they were introducing any strange and astonishing discovery.

It is further to be observed, that the style of these two writers is in many instances highly figurative. In the gospel of John our Lord sometimes uses metaphors of the most obscure and offensive kind, such as 'eating his flesh' and 'drinking his blood,' to express the reception of

[1] See Dr. Priestley's History of Early Opinions, book iii. chap. 4, 5, 6.

his doctrine. Chap. vi. 56. And Paul in his epistles introduces many harsh and uncommon figures, viz. 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,' to express the union of true believers under Christ as their head. Eph. v. 30. It is therefore reasonable to expect that such writers will use figurative language concerning Christ; and it is peculiarly necessary, in reading their writings, to distinguish carefully between what is literal and what is figurative.

With regard to the apostle Paul, it is worthy of remark that little or no evidence is pretended to be produced from his larger epistles, in favour of the popular doctrine concerning the person of Christ. Few proofs are alleged from the epistle to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians, that to the Galatians, the two to the Thessalonians, or those to Timothy, Titus, or Philemon. The principal appeal is to the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, which are figurative throughout beyond all others; and to the epistle to the Hebrews, the author of which is doubtful, and in which the writer indulges himself in an ingenious, but forced and fanciful analogy between the Mosaic institute and the Christian dispensation.

Is it possible to believe that this stupendous

doctrine, if it were true, would be found clearly expressed in no other part of the sacred writings, but in the mystical discourses of the evangelist John; in two of the obscurest epistles of Paul; and in the epistle of another unknown writer? Surely, if it were fact that Jesus of Nazareth was truly God, or the Maker of the world in a human shape, it is a fact that would have blazed in every page of the New Testament; and would never have been mentioned by the sacred writers but with the most evident marks of astonishment and awe.

Persons who have not much attended to the subject, and who have been educated in the belief of these extraordinary doctrines, are surprised when they come to learn how few passages of Scripture can be produced in favour of the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus Christ. The truth is, that these texts, so few in number, are so often cited, and repeated, and insisted upon, that they occupy a very prominent place in the memory and imagination, and are commonly thought to be much more numerous, clear and decisive, than in fact they are. Like the stars in the firmament, they dazzle the eye of the superficial spectator, and excite the ideas of number and magnitude far beyond the reality.

The eye of reason, aided by philosophy, diminishes their number, deprives them of their glare, and reduces them to their true proportion[2].

I.

The first passage which is alleged as decicisively proving the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, is John i. 1—14.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." &c.

The expression *Word*, or *Logos* as it stands in the original, has been understood in a great variety of senses, according to the different hypotheses which have been entertained concerning the person of Christ.

1. The early platonizing christian writers conceived the Logos to be the intelligence of God personified, or converted into a real person, and united to a human soul[3].

2. The proper Trinitarians assert that the Logos is truly God, necessarily derived from

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[2] See Dr. Priestley's History of Early Opinions, vol i Introd. sect. 1, 2. vol. iii. book iii. chap. 6, 7. Dr. Carpenter's Letters to Mr. Veysie, letter 2.

[3] See Priestley's History of Early Opinions, vol ii. book ii. chap. 5. Lindsey's Second Address to the Students at the two Universities, chap. ii.

the Father, but of the same nature with him, and in all respects equal to him. This is the doctrine held by bishops Bull and Horsley, Dr. Waterland, and others.

3. Others maintain that the Logos, or Word, is the first and greatest of created beings, in whom the fulness of the godhead dwells, and with whom the divine nature is so intimately united, that he is truly and properly one with God. This is the hypothesis of Dr. Thomas Burnet, Dr. Doddridge, and many other learned men.

4. Dr. Clarke, and those who have been called Semi-Arians, maintain that the Logos is a being uncreated, but from all eternity begotten, *i. e.* in some incomprehensible manner derived from the will and power of the Father, possessed of all divine attributes, self-existence alone excepted, and the delegate of the Almighty in the creation, support, and government of the universe; that he assumed human nature, and animated the body of Christ.

5. The Arians affirm that the Logos is the first and greatest of created beings, delegated by the Father to be the Maker and Governor of this world, or system, or of all worlds and systems, and the medium of all the divine dis-

pensations to mankind. He became incarnate to redeem the world, and animated the body of Christ. This is the hypothesis supported by Dr. Whitby in his Last Thoughts; also by Mr. Whiston, Mr. Emlyn, Dr. Price, and many others.

6. An opinion has been taken up by some learned moderns, that the Logos is merely a spirit of an order superior to mankind, who assumed human nature in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but who had no concern in the formation of the world, nor in any of the preceding dispensations of God to mankind.

These hypotheses, with the arguments for and against them, will be stated more at large in the Second Part of this Inquiry.

7. Many have maintained that the word *Logos* means the wisdom and power of God, by which all things were originally made, which attributes were eminently displayed in the mission, doctrine, miracles, and character of the man Jesus. This is the explanation advanced and approved by Grotius, Lardner, Lindsey, Priestley, and most of the modern Unitarians.

According to this interpretation of the word, Mr. Lindsey, in his List of False Readings and Mistranslations, p. 40, has given the fol-

lowing new translation of the proëm to John's gospel.

" In the beginning was wisdom, and wisdom was with God; and God was wisdom. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, and without it was nothing made. In it was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

" There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which came into the world, and enlighteneth every man.

" It, i. e. *divine wisdom*, was in the world, and the world was made by it, and the world knew it not. It came to its own land, and its own people received it not. But as many as received it, to them it gave power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on its name. Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

" And wisdom became man and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory, the glory as of

the well-beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Mr. Lindsey argues at large in favour of this interpretation in the third chapter of the Sequel to his Apology, and Mr. Wakefield in his Translation of the New Testament gives the same sense.

This interpretation is supposed to be favoured by Solomon's description of wisdom, Prov. viii.; —by the use of the word *Logos* in the Old Testament for the wisdom and power of God; see Psalm xxxiii. 6;—by the custom of the Chaldee paraphrasts in using the *Word of God* for God himself; see Isa. xlv. 12; xlviii. 13. Gen. i. 27; iii. 8; and Lindsey's Sequel, p. 380.—And lastly, it appears that Philo and other platonizing philosophers in or near the apostolic age used the word *Logos* to express the personification of the divine attributes.

Against this interpretation the following objections have been urged:

1.] That the word '*beginning*' (ἀρχὴ), though often occurring in the writings of John, almost uniformly signifies the beginning of our Lord's ministry, or of the new dispensation; and very seldom, if ever, the beginning of the world; much less does it express duration from eter-

nity[4]. John vi. 64, "Jesus knew from the beginning who it was that would betray him." Chap. xv. 27, "Ye have been with me from the beginning[5]."

2.] It does not appear that the word *Logos* is ever used for wisdom (σοφια) in the Old Testament. When it is said that the heavens were made by the *word* of God, the allusion appears to be to the account of the creation in the book of Genesis, where every thing comes into existence at the command of God. "He spake, and it was done." Psalm xxxiii. 9.

3.] The expression "all things," (παντα,) in the writings of John, never signifies the created universe.

4.] The word γινομαι, which is translated

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[4] The history of John beginning with the same words as the history of Moses, Genesis i. 1, has induced many to infer that they express the same date, though no conclusion can be more precarious.

[5] The word αρχη occurs six times in the gospel of John (besides twice in the proëm), and eleven times in his epistles; in all which places it clearly expresses the beginning of the gospel: excepting chap. ii. 11, where it is used for the first miracle; and chap. viii. 44, and 1 John iii. 8, in which places the devil is said to have been from the beginning a liar and murderer. The other texts where the word occurs are, John vi. 64; viii. 25; xv. 27; xvi. 4. 1 John i. 1; ii. 7, 13, 14, 24; iii. 11. 2 John, 5, 6. See Simpson's Essays on Language of Scripture, Ess. vii.

to be made, occurs nearly seven hundred times in the New Testament, and more than a hundred times in the writings of this evangelist; but it is no where used in the sense of creation[6].

8. Another interpretation of the Logos has been proposed, which is less liable to objection. The Logos is the man Jesus Christ by whom God hath spoken to the world, the teacher of truth and righteousness.

This was the interpretation of the Polish Socinians: it was adopted by Hopton Haynes, the friend of Sir Isaac Newton, and has lately been revived with some modifications, and defended, by Mr. J. Palmer, of Birmingham, in the Theological Repository, vol. vii.; by Mr. Cappe, in his Dissertations; by Mr. Simpson, in his Essays; by Dr. Carpenter, in his Reply to Mr. Veysie; and it is adopted in the Improved Version.

It is a considerable presumption in favour of this interpretation, that it harmonizes with the introduction to the first epistle of John, which is a kind of comment upon the proëm to the gospel, which contains many of the same or

[6] Heb. iv. 3; xi. 3. James iii. 9; have been alleged as exceptions: but they will all admit a fair interpretation without assigning to the word γινομαι so unusual a sense. Simpson, ibid. p. 27. See Improved Version, in loc.

similar expressions, and which is universally understood of the person of Christ.

1 John i. 1, 2. "That which was from the BEGINNING, which we have heard, which we saw with our eyes, which we have LOOKED UPON, or BEHELD, which our hands have handled, of the WORD OF LIFE. And this LIFE was manifested, and we have seen it, and BEAR WITNESS, and show unto you that ETERNAL LIFE, which was WITH THE FATHER, and was MANIFESTED to us." Ver. 5, "God is LIGHT, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in DARKNESS, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the LIGHT, as he is in the LIGHT, we have fellowship one with another."

It is impossible not to remark the similarity of phrase between the epistle and the gospel; the words 'beginning,' 'word,' 'life,' 'light,' 'darkness,' &c. occurring in both. But it is plain that the *Word* of *life* and *light*, which from the *beginning* was *heard*, and *seen*, and *touched*, and *manifested*, and *borne witness to*, in the epistle, is Jesus Christ: and therefore it is Jesus Christ to whom the same or a similar phraseology is applied in the gospel.

The following is the translation and exposition of the passage, upon this hypothesis.

Ver. 1. "In the beginning[7] was the Word[8], and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god[9]."

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[7] Or *from the first.* See Cappe's Diss. vol. i. p 19; and Simpson's Essays, No. vii. p. 5. Improved Vers. in loc. See p. 26, note 4.

[8] *i. e.* Jesus, the person by whom God spake to mankind. Hence, Rev. xix. 13, he is called the Word of God: and, 1 John i. 1, the Word of Life; because he taught the doctrine of eternal life. Our Lord appears to be denoted by the same title, Luke i. 2, They who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the Word. And again, Luke iv. 36, And they were all amazed and spake, saying, Τις ὁ λογος ουτος; *Qualis est hic doctor?* Who is this Word, or teacher? See Schleusner in verb. Christ is called Life, because he is the teacher of Life; Truth, because he is the teacher of Truth; the Way, because he teaches the Way of righteousness; the Light, because he introduces Light into the world: so he is called the Word, because he teaches the Word or doctrine of God.

[9] In the Scriptures the word *God* is applied; 1st, To prophets who were commissioned to deliver messages from God. John x. 35, "He called them *gods*, to whom the word of God came."—2dly, To a prophet who was authorized to work miracles. Exod. vii. 1, "The Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a *god* to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." Here Aaron is to deliver the message, but Moses to perform the miracle.—3dly, To magistrates, and persons in high civil authority. Psalm lxxxii. 1, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the *gods*." See also ver. 6. Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 9. Deut. x. 17. 1 Sam. xxviii. 13. In all these senses the title God might with peculiar propriety be applied to Jesus,

From the commencement of his public ministry, Jesus was a teacher of truth and life. And as Moses was with God in the mount to receive the law, (Exod. xxxiv. 28;) so Jesus withdrew from the world, into the wilderness or elsewhere, to receive his instructions and qualifications from God. And being a prophet of the highest order, to whom the divine will was fully revealed, who was endued in a very superior degree with miraculous powers, and who was appointed Lord and King, in that new dispensation which he was authorized to introduce to supersede the Mosaic covenant, he is for these reasons, in the well known phraseology of the Jewish scriptures, entitled to be called a god, though obviously in a sense infinitely below that in which the same expression is applied to the Supreme Original Being.

Ver. 2. "This Word was in the beginning with God [10]."

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for to him was communicated the Spirit without measure: John iii. 34. And when asked by Pilate whether he was a king; he replied, "I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world." John xviii. 37. Crellius conjectured that the true reading of the original was Θεᾶ, "the word was God's:" but this conjecture, though ingenious and not improbable, yet, being unauthorized by manuscripts, versions, or quotations in ecclesiastical writers, is inadmissible.

[10] The stress in this clause appears to lie upon the words εν αρχῇ,

Before he appeared in public, from the very commencement of his ministry, he had intercourse with God, and was called, and qualified by him, for his high and important office.

Ver. 3. "All things [11] were done [12] through

'in the beginning,' or 'at first.' Jesus did not obtrude himself into his high office without a proper call. He did not appear in public till he had been fully instructed, qualified, and disciplined for his great undertaking. Compare Heb. v. 5, "Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."

[11] *All things*] (παντα), *i. e.* all things which concern the new dispensation which Jesus was commissioned to introduce. This word is often used in a restricted sense, and in this sense in particular 1 John ii. 20, "Ye have an unction from the holy One, and know all things." See also John xiii. 3; xiv. 6; xvi. 13. 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Eph. i. 3, 21, 22. Acts i. 1.

[12] *Were done*] (εγενετο). Though γινομαι never signifies 'to create,' yet, as Mr. Cappe observes, (Crit. Rem. vol. i. pag. 39,) it is a word of very general signification: it signifies 'to be,' 'to come to pass,' 'to be done,' as well as 'to be made.' John xv. 7, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be *done* unto you." xix. 36, "These things were *done* (εγενετο), that the Scripture might be fulfilled." See also Matt. v. 18; vi. 8; xxi. 42; xxvi. 6. Improved Version in loc.; and Dr. Carpenter's Letters to Veysie, p. 79. Mr. Cappe renders the text, "All things were by him, and without him was not any that has been." Mr. Simpson, (Diss. vii. p. 45,) "All things were *formed* by him; all the regeneration of mankind which the Gospel produced was effected by his instrumentality." He observes, p. 28, that "though the apostle John never uses γινομαι for proper creation, yet he often employs it to denote a change of state, condition, or properties." Dr. Carpenter well

him [13], and without him not a single thing was done, which hath been done [14]."

Every thing relating to the introduction of the new dispensation has been accomplished, either by Jesus himself, or by his apostles and messengers, who derived their commission and

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remarks, that "the common rendering of ver. 3, 'all things were made by him;' and of ver. 10, 'the world was made by him,' has perhaps more than any thing contributed to establish in the minds of the unlearned the Trinitarian or the Arian hypothesis concerning our Saviour," *viz.* that he was the Creator and Former of the material universe.

[13] *Through him,*] δι' αυτε, 'through his instrumentality.' He was the mediator of the new covenant: the only medium of the christian dispensation: the only person who derived his instructions and powers immediately from God. His apostles derived their authority, qualifications and powers from him. John xv. 26, "When the advocate is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father." Ver. 16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and appointed you." Acts ii. 32, 33, "Jesus, having received from the Father the promise of the holy spirit, has poured forth this," &c.

[14] *Not a single thing, &c.*] υδε εν ὁ γεγονεν. See Campbell. The apostles derived all their powers from Christ, and could do nothing without him. John xv. 5. Compare ver. 4, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, unless ye abide in me"—He was probably personally present with, and occasionally he visibly manifested himself to, his apostles in the course of their ministry: Matt. xxviii. 20. They worked miracles in his name: Acts iii. 6; ix. 34. He converted Paul, appeared to him repeatedly, and directed his missionary journeys: Acts ix. 5; xviii. 9. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. See also Rev. i. 1.

powers from him, and who performed nothing without his express warrant and authority.

Ver. 4. "By him was life[15], and the life was the light of men."

Jesus is the revealer of a future life by a resurrection from the grave; and this heavenly doctrine is the principal means of instruction, reformation, and comfort to mankind.

Ver. 5. "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness hath not overtaken it[16]."

This glorious light which Jesus kindled, and which diffuses its beams over a benighted world, still continues to shine. It is not yet extinguished, nor ever shall be.

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[15] *By him was life*] John vi. 68, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." 1 John v. 11, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son." Hence our Lord calls himself "the Resurrection and the Life," John xi. 25. "The Way, the Truth, and the Life," John xiv. 6. In like manner, and for like reasons, he is called "the Light," John viii. 12; xii. 35, 36. See Cappe, p. 43, 44. Imp. Ver. in loc.

[16] *Darkness hath not overtaken it,*] ⸀ κατελαβεν. Compare ver. 9. 1 John ii. 8. "The word καταλαμβανω is often used of the day and night and their vicissitudes." See John xii. 35, 'Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you:' and 1 Thess. v. 4. See Cappe's Crit. Rem. ibid. p. 46. Some render the words "the darkness comprehended it not,"—mankind in general did not understand the true nature of it. Simpson's Essays, p. 45.

Ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. "A man, whose name was John, was sent from God[17]. This man came for a testimony, to bear witness concerning the light, that through him all might believe. He was not the light, but sent to bear witness of the light. The true light was that which, being come into the world[18], is enlightening every man."

John the Baptist was divinely commissioned to announce the approach of a greater prophet, whose beneficent errand it would be to enlighten and to bless the human race. John, though he was himself a burning and a shining light, equal to any of the prophets who preceded him, was not, nor did he ever profess to be, any thing more than the humble harbinger of a far greater prophet who was to succeed. That great pro-

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[17] "*To be sent from God,*" is to be a prophet, to come to men with a divine message. If John was sent *from* God, it implies that he had been previously *with* God, to be instructed by him. This explains the phrase in verses 1 and 2, where it is said that the Word, Jesus, was with God. See Cappe, p. 23.

[18] *That which being come.*] Cappe and Campbell read *he who, &c.*, as being more intelligible, though not exactly corresponding with the original. For the trajection, see Campbell's valuable note. *True*, is often used in Scripture to signify *great, illustrious, excellent.* Cappe, ibid. p. 48. *Every man, i. e.* Jew and Gentile, all nations. John xii. 32. Acts xvii. 30. 1 Tim. ii. 4; Rom. ii. 10. Heb. ii. 9. Cappe, ibid.

phet is Jesus of Nazareth, who, having risen like the sun upon a benighted world, is to this hour, and will ever continue to be, diffusing light, and hope, and happiness to all of every nation, Jew or Gentile, who are willing to receive the benefit of his beautiful and cheering rays.

Ver. 10. "He was in the world[19], and the world was *enlightened* by him[20], yet the world knew him not."

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[19] *The world*] κοσμος per metonymiam significat incolas orbis terrarum α) generatim, universum genus humanum: β) speciatim, magnam hominum multitudinem, &c. Schleusner in verb.—This word occurs upwards of a hundred times in the writings of John, but seldom if ever in the sense of the visible creation, or the material world. Simpson, p. 35. And as it is said that the world knew him not, it is evidently to be understood here of intelligent beings, of mankind in general. Ib. p. 37.

[20] *Was* enlightened *by him.*] With some hesitation I adopt the method of supplying the ellipsis, proposed by my learned and ingenious friend Dr. Carpenter in his Letters to Mr. Veysie, p. 79. *q. d.* εγενετο ὁ κοσμος πεφωτισμενος: see ver. 6. The preceding context justifies in his opinion his insertion of the word *enlightened.* As Matt. xxiii. 15. the word *proselyte* must be supplied from the foregoing clause: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, και ὁταν γενηται, *i. e.* προσηλυτος, when *the proselyte* is made, ye make him &c." This gives a better sense than the common translation, "the world was made by him," if understood of the new moral creation. For in that case it would not be strictly true that the world knew him not. For the new-created world did know him, and acknowledge his authority. But the world might be enlightened by Christ,

Jesus appeared in public; to all without distinction he proclaimed his heavenly doctrine: but, though a few well-disposed persons received his message and became his followers, the bulk of mankind disregarded his declarations, and rejected his authority.

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and at the same time might refuse to derive benefit from him, or to submit to his claims. They shut their eyes against the light, and chose darkness because their deeds were evil.

Mr. Simpson indeed obviates this objection by observing, that verbs which signify the simple act or effect, sometimes express only the design and tendency, and at other times the endeavour or using means: *q. d.* The tendency of his doctrine was to reform the world. Ibid. p. 38. This is ingenious, and may be just; but the other interpretation seems to suit the connexion better.

Mr. Simpson's own translation is: "He was in the world, and the world was *formed* by him, yet the world knew him not." Which he paraphrases thus: "He was publicly conversant with men; many were reformed by him; and he imparted the best means of renovating the human race, yet mankind in general did not believe in him." Ibid. p. 46.

Mr. Cappe gives quite a new turn to the passage. He translates the text; "He was in the world, and the world was made *for* him." *q. d.* "He was for some time freely and publicly conversant among his countrymen, preaching the word of God;—yet, though the Jewish dispensation was calculated to excite the expectation of him at this time, to reveal him, and recommend him, &c.; that world, the subjects of the Jewish dispensation, to whom such advantages in this respect had been vouchsafed, knew him not." Cappe, ibid. p. 10.

Of this interpretation the learned and excellent writer gives a

Ver. 11, 12, 13. "He came into his own country [21], and his countrymen received him not. Nevertheless, to as many as received him, and believed in his name, he granted the privilege of becoming children of God. Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God [22]."

The ministry of Jesus was exercised in Galilee and Judea, among his own countrymen the Jews. These in general rejected his credentials with disdain. A small number, however, who were of a better temper, acknowledged his

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very particular and ingenious vindication. p. 50—62. But though he has brought abundant evidence to prove that διὰ with a genitive sometimes expresses the final cause, I nevertheless feel some reluctance to understand it in this passage in a sense so unusual, when the construction does not require it, and a very good and obvious sense can be given without it. But the intelligent reader will form his own judgement which of these interpretations is to be preferred.

It may not be amiss to remark, *en passant*, that the evangelist by this form of expression, ὁ κοσμος δι' αυτε εγενετο, cannot reasonably be understood to teach the popular doctrine that the material world was created by Christ: first, because the word κοσμος seldom, probably never, signifies the material world in the writings of this evangelist; and secondly, because the word γινομαι never signifies *to create*

[21] *Came to his own country.*] See Cappe and Campbell.

[22] *Who were born, &c.*] See Improved Version, and Mr. Cappe's Crit. Rem. p. 10, and p. 63, &c.

claims and submitted to his authority. And to those who received him as the Messiah he imparted the great privilege of adoption into the family of God, by which they became entitled to the hope of immortal life. And this privilege was not obtained in the mode prescribed by the Mosaic law,—by birth, or by marriage, or by proselytism; but was communicated to all believers without distinction by the free gift and abundant goodness of God.

Ver. 14. "And the Word was flesh[23] and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory."

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[23] *And* (or *nevertheless*) *the Word* was *flesh*] ὁ λογος σαρξ εγενετο· not was *made* flesh, or *became* flesh, but *was* flesh. So ver. 6, Εγενετο ανθρωπος απεσταλμενος, a man *was* sent, not was *made* sent, or *became* sent. Luke xxiv. 19, the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, ὁς εγενετο ανηρ προφητης, who *was*, not who *became*, a prophet mighty in word and deed.

The word was flesh,] *i. e.* a man, a proper human being. In this sense the word *flesh* is often used in the Scriptures. See Psalm lxv. 2. Rom. iii. 20. John iii. 6; xvii. 2. Acts ii. 17. Luke iii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 29. &c. &c.: and it occurs in this sense in the preceding verse. "Frequently and peculiarly," says Mr. Lindsey, Sequel, p. 136, "it stands for man as mortal, subject to infirmities and suffering, and as such is particularly appropriated to Christ here and in other places." 1 Tim. iii. 16. Rom. i. 3; ix. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 18; iv. 1. See Improved Version, in loc. Cappe, ibid. p. 86. Simpson, ibid. p. 40.

This interpretation of the proëm of John's gospel is in the main the same with that of Socinus, Slichtingius, Wolzogenius,

Jesus, this great teacher of truth and revealer of the will of God, though so highly honoured above all the prophets who preceded him, was nevertheless, as it was foretold he would be, (Isaiah liii. 2, 3,) a man, a frail suffering man, compassed with infirmities, in all things like to his brethren. He passed among us a short and transitory life, and was in no respect distinguished from other men, but as he was selected by divine wisdom, and qualified by divine power to be the messenger of grace and peace to mankind. This was his chief glory, and to this high distinction of our exalted Master we were the personal and admiring witnesses.

II.

John i. 15. "John bare witness of him. This is he of whom I said, He who cometh after me has got before me[24], for he was my principal[25]."

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and Crellius; only that the Socinian expositors contend for a local ascent of Jesus into heaven after his baptism, and previously to his appearance as a public instructor.

[24] *He who cometh after me,*] ὁ ὀπισω μου ερχομενος, the comer after me, he who set out after me, whose harbinger I was, εμπροσθεν μου γεγονεν, has overtaken and passed me in the career. The idea is taken from "the relation of the harbinger to the prince whom he precedes." See Cappe, p. 108. Εμπροσθεν is an adverb both of time and place. See Schleusner.

[25] *He was my principal,*] πρωτος μου. The word is used in this

John bore testimony to the superior character and dignity of Jesus. This, said he, is the person whose harbinger I was. I announced his approach, and have finished my career. He has now overtaken me, and has taken precedence of me, to which he is justly entitled, because he is the very person whose advent I was commissioned to proclaim.

III.

John iii. 13. "Now no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, *who is in heaven.*"

This is a text the right understanding of which is of great importance for settling the controversy concerning the pre-existence of Christ.

The words in their primary signification express a local ascent of the Son of Man into hea-

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sense, 1 Tim. i. 15, 16; "Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the *chief*." See Mark vi. 21. Luke xix. 47. Acts xiii. 50; xvii. 4.

The common interpretation of the text is: "He who cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was (in order of time) before me." And Hammond, Doddridge, Campbell, and others, contend that the latter clause must refer to antecedency in order of time, otherwise the sentence is tautological, and the evangelist is arguing idem per idem. But Mr. Cappe's interpretation sufficiently obviates this objection. The last clause is a good reason why the person who set out last took precedence of him who was originally first.

ven, a local descent from heaven, and a local existence in heaven while he was residing on earth.

In this primary sense the text is not received by any; but by some, one clause, by others, two, and by others, all the clauses are interpreted in a figurative sense.

1. The first clause, which expresses that the Son of Man had ascended into heaven, is understood in a literal sense by the Polish Socinians only, who believed that Christ was taken up into heaven after his baptism to receive his commission from God, and to be instructed in the divine counsels. In support of this interpretation they argue, that the verb is in the preter tense; that the subject of the affirmation is the Son of Man, who as such could have no existence before his birth; that the expression could not with propriety be used of a continued existence in heaven previous to a residence on earth; and that it is improper and unnecessary to have recourse to a figurative interpretation when the literal sense is obvious and probable[26].

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[26] Αναβεβηκε.] "Loquitur non de ascensu suo futuro, sed de ascensu præterito: ut scilicet in cœlo celestia edoctus, ea deinde e cœlo remeans loqueretur et doceret in terris. Qui hic ad me-

Mr. John Palmer[27], improving upon this hypothesis of the older Socinians, supposes that our Lord while he was in the wilderness was favoured with divine communications, during which he was completely secluded from all connexion with the external world; and, like St. Paul, (2 Cor. xii.) he might imagine himself transported into heaven, and not be able to distinguish whether what he saw and heard was visionary or real. And Mr. Palmer thought that when Jesus spoke of himself as having been in heaven, and as coming down from heaven, it was in allusion to this divine vision.

This very ingenious and plausible hypothesis, which Dr. Priestley mentions in terms of

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taphoras et improprias locutiones confugiunt sine ulla necessitate id faciunt, &c." Slichtingius in loc. See also Wolzogenius in loc.: and Christ. Relig. Institut. apud Socini Opp., tom. i. p. 674, 675.

[27] Mr. John Palmer was a man of abilities and learning, and an excellent Scripture critic. He was educated at the Warrington Academy, and for some years was settled with a congregation at Macclesfield. He afterward retired to Birmingham, where he assisted Dr. Priestley in conducting the Theological Repository, in which he wrote some valuable articles, and had planned more, but was prevented by a stroke of the palsy, which put an end to his life in December 1787. Dr. Priestley published an interesting account of him in the Theological Repository, vol. vi. p. 217.

great respect[28], appears liable to the following objections. That a fact of such high importance, and so honourable to the character of Jesus, should not have been mentioned or alluded to by any other of the evangelical historians or sacred writers; that the phrases of 'ascending up to heaven' and 'descending from heaven,' as applied to Christ, are peculiar to John, and therefore probably (like some other peculiarities of phraseology in this writer) mean nothing more than what the other writers have expressed in different language; and, finally, that it does not appear that any of the early christian sects or ecclesiastical writers ever heard of this supposed assumption of Christ into heaven, or ever attempted to explain the evangelist's phrases by that hypothesis.

As this personal ascent of Jesus into heaven previous to his entrance upon his public ministry, whether real or visionary, is not allowed by the bulk of christian divines, the first clause of this text is generally interpreted in a figurative sense.

Bishop Pearce, and after him Archbishop

[28] After having stated Mr. Palmer's hypothesis, Dr. Priestley adds: "I acknowledge myself to be much pleased with Mr. Palmer's ideas upon this subject." Theol. Repos. ibid. p. 221.

Newcome, render the words " No man *goeth up* to heaven," which they explain, No man is to go up thither. " The preter tense," say these learned prelates, " is used for the present, and this again for the future[29]."

This, however, is not the interpretation generally adopted. The most common and best supported exposition of the phrase '*No man*

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[29] See Pearce and Newcome in loc. So then the words 'No man *hath* ascended up to heaven' mean 'No man *will* ascend thither.' Let not the Unitarians be any longer reproached as the only expositors who warp the Scriptures from their plain and obvious sense to serve a hypothesis. The arguments, however, of these learned prelates will not support their conclusion. Bp. Pearce produces passages in which the preter tense may be and is translated in the present. John vi. 69; xi. 27; xx. 29, 17; iii. 18: He also quotes Iliad. ἀ. 37. ὃς χρυσην αμφιεβηκας. And the archbishop cites John iii. 18, in which the present tense has the force of a future. But no instance is produced in which the preter tense has the force of the future only; and it is apprehended that none such can be alleged. For the preter can only be translated in the present tense when it expresses the continuance of an action, 'I have been and continue to be,' 'Thou hast protected and dost continue to protect,' &c. And the present is only used as a future figuratively, to express the certainty of the event, or that it is very near at hand. See Wolzogenius in loc.

Campbell and Wakefield both translate the verb in the present tense, 'ascendeth;' but without sufficient attention to the connexion, which implies that the Son of Man had himself ascended, though others had not. Erasmus observes, " Græcis præt. temporis est, ne quis putet de futura ascensione intelligi."

hath ascended up to heaven,' is this, No one is acquainted with the counsels and purposes of God to man kind[30].

'To ascend to heaven' is a Hebrew form of expression to denote the knowled e of things mysterious and remote from common apprehen-

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[30] The agreement of the commentators in this interpretation is very remarkable.

"Ascendere in cœlum dicitur qui arcana cœli penetrat. Quantum cœlum a terra distat, tantum consilia divina ab humanis." Grotius.—"Ascendit in cœlum: i.e. Spiritualis intelligentiæ luce præditus est." Beza —"Ascendit in cœlum: i.e. Nemo novit res cœlestes præter me." Vatablus.—"Ascendere in cœlum, hoc loco, uti intuenti Christi scopum satis liquet, nihil aliud est quam inquirere, aut admitti in conscientiam consilii divini." Cameron.—"Il faut entendre ces paroles figurément de la connoissance des verités célestes." Le Clerc.—"In cœlum ascendere hoc loco significat arcana atque mysteria cœlestia scrutari, ac nósse." Wolzogenius.—"No man can acquaint you with these heavenly things, for no other person hath ascended into heaven to learn them there." Whitby.—"No one ever hath ascended into heaven to search into the secret counsels, and to obtain an intimate and perfect knowledge of the truths of God." Dr. Doddridge: who remarks that the phrase 'ascending up into heaven' is plainly used in this sense, Deut. xxx. 12. Rom. x. 6. Prov. xxx. 4.—Mr. Lindsey in his Sequel, p. 213 et seq. observes, that "in the strict literal sense it was by no means true, that no one had ascended up into heaven but the Son of Man; for Enoch in all probability, and Elijah the prophet had certainly been translated from earth to heaven. Neither is it true, in the direct sense of the words, that the Son of Man had ascended up into heaven. We have no account in Scripture that he ever ascended into heaven but once, when he took his final leave of this earth

sion. Deut. xxx. 11, "This commandment is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say Who will go up for us to heaven and bring it?" Prov. xxx. 4, "Who hath ascended into heaven or descended." Rom. x. 6, "Say not in thy heart Who shall ascend into heaven," &c. Baruch iii. 29, "Who hath gone up into heaven and taken her, *i. e.* wisdom, and brought her down from the clouds?"

In the preceding verse Jesus says to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things," *i. e.* things plain and intelligible, "and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" *i. e.* things difficult and remote from your conceptions?

It is supposed that our Lord alludes to the ascent of Moses to the mount to receive the Law. This is not improbable, as he immediately

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and of his disciples." Hence he infers that 'ascending up to heaven' signifies his being admitted to the knowledge of God's counsels.

Ludolphus Raphelius, in his preface to his father George Raphelius's Annotations upon the Scriptures, has given a learned and judicious dissertation upon this text; and after a very fair and impartial examination he concludes, "Ex his itaque satis constare arbitror, Christum nihil aliud velle, quam quod nemo consilia Dei sciat, nisi filius hominis, *ipse deus, qui ex cœlo ad nos descendit.*" I add these words, to show that this is not the gloss of a prejudiced Unitarian.

mentions Moses, and speaks of his lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. Perhaps he might mean to hint at the superior dignity and importance of the Christian dispensation to that of Moses. Moses ascended the mount, but the Son of Man ascended to heaven.

The Jews in the Targum say, in honour of Moses, that "he ascended into the high heavens," by which they could mean no more than his admission to the divine counsels. See Whitby in loc.

That which is plain and obvious and well understood is said not to be in heaven. Deut. xxx. 11. Rom. x. 6. See above, and Grotius in loc.

2. The meaning of the first clause being thus settled, that of the second is now to be investigated.

"But he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man."

This clause was understood in a literal sense by the Socinians, who believed in the local ascent of Christ up to heaven, and in his local descent to earth again.

It is interpreted literally by the Arians, who believe that the divine Logos who made the

world was the spirit which animated the body of Christ.

It is interpreted figuratively by the believers in the proper deity of Christ, who do not maintain that the deity locally descended from heaven to become incarnate, because God is omnipresent, but that he manifested himself on earth in the person of Christ. So God is said to have descended to see the tower of Babel, and the iniquity of Sodom. Gen. xi. 5; xviii. 21. See Whitby in loc.

It is interpreted figuratively by the Unitarians, who explain the second clause in a similar manner, and as perfectly correlative with the first.

"No man hath ascended up to heaven:" *i. e.* No one is instructed in the divine counsels:

"But he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man:" *i. c.* Excepting the Son of Man, who had a commission from God to reveal his will to mankind [31].

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[31] "Que celui qui en est descendu. C'est à dire, qui a été envoyé aux hommes par Dieu son Père: ou qui est un present celeste que Dieu leur a fait." Voyez ch. vi. 58. Jam. i. 17; iii. 15, 17. Le Clerc.

"If 'ascending up to heaven' is not to be taken literally, neither is 'descending from heaven' to be understood of a local descent.

First, This is a form of expression which is unquestionably used in Scripture to express what is of divine origin or authority. Matt. xxi. 25, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?" This question our Lord put in reply to the question of the chief priests and elders, "By what authority dost thou these things?" So that in the language of our Lord himself, 'coming from heaven' is equivalent to coming with divine authority [32].

Secondly, This sense best suits the connexion of the words. The second clause, 'came down

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For the Son of Man, as it is here asserted, could not come down from heaven, where he had confessedly never been." Lindsey's Sequel, p. 216.

[32] Compare James i. 17, "Every good gift is from above, and *cometh down* from the Father of light." iii. 15—17, "This wisdom descendeth not from above; .... but the wisdom that is from above is first pure," &c.

"E cœlo descendit γνωθι σεαυτον."— Juvenal.

"Audire desidero cœlo aliquid lapsum." Arnobius, lib. 7.

It is observable that Mark and Luke relate this incident of the application of the elders to demand our Lord's authority, and the reply of Jesus concerning John's baptism, in the same words as Matthew, as if they had been solicitous to notify to their readers that descending from heaven signifies nothing more than coming with divine authority. Mark xi. 27. Luke xx. 1.

from heaven,' is correlate to the first, 'ascended up to heaven.' It is therefore to be understood similarly. If the first clause is figurative, the second is figurative: if the first is literal, the second is literal. Good writers do not in grave discourse capriciously change the meaning of their words: and in this case there is no necessity to suppose a change. On the contrary, the sense is perfectly clear, intelligible and apposite without it.

It is replied, that it is no uncommon thing, in two antithetic clauses, for the same word to be taken in its primary sense in one clause, and figuratively in the other. Many instances of this kind, it is said, occur in the New Testament, of which 1 Thess. v. 4, et seq. is referred to as an example: "Ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief,[33]" and the like.

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[33] This objection to the common interpretation of the second clause of the text in John, from the change of the sense of an important word without any notice or necessity, though so obvious and forcible, is not, that I recollect, mentioned by any critic but Raphelius, whose words I transcribe. Præf. § 17.

"Coronidis loco objectioni cuidam adhuc respondendum est. Scilicet facile quisquam putet, si ascendere in cœlum idem sit quod *scire* mysteria divina, oppositum descendere, idem fore quod *nescire*. Ad quam objectionem respondit Dunnhauerus quod ejus nulla sit sequela, quia nihil sit insolitum inter duas voces oppositi-

But it may be answered that such a change, in the meaning of the same word in the same sentence without notice, is not common, nor to be admitted without necessity.

3. " Who is in heaven."

This clause is omitted in the Vatican and some other manuscripts, and is at least of doubtful authenticity. See Griesbach; and the Improved Version.

Of those who receive it as genuine, the believers in the deity of Christ understand it as expressing his omnipresence[34].

Arians and Socinians translate the words,

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tas, unam proprie, alteram figurate, accipi. Non probavit hanc suam thesin exemplis, quoniam operæ pretium haud esse duxit: cum plurima ejus rei occurrant in S. Codice. Unicum solummodo allegabo, 1 Thess. v. 4. seqq. ubi in una oratione duæ voces *nox* atque *dies* modo proprie modo improprie accipiuntur, uti facile intelliget qui verba Pauli debita animi considerabit attentione."

It is singular that, if examples are so numerous, only one should be produced. At any rate this change of signification is not to be admitted without obvious necessity. It is a fair remark, that if 'ascending to heaven' signifies knowing the divine counsels, 'descending from heaven' may signify not knowing them. But the figure is preserved if the person spoken of ascends to learn heavenly truths, and descends to communicate them. And this sense is confirmed by the language of Jesus concerning John's baptism: Matt. xxi. 25.

[34] *Who is in heaven,*] as " he is now present there by his divine nature, which fills both heaven and earth." Doddridge. See Whithy.

"who *was* in heaven." So John ix. 25, "Whereas I *was* blind, now I see[35]." The Arians understand the clause of the pre-existence of Christ; the Socinians, of his translation to heaven after his baptism.

The Unitarians in general consider it as a continuation of the figure or allegory in the first and second clauses. "The Son of Man,

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[35] Ὁ ων εν τῳ ϐρανῳ, who was in heaven. Compare chap. ix. 25, τυφλος ων, αρτι ϐλεπω· and chap. i. 18, The only-begotten Son, ὁ ων εις τον κολπον, who is or was in the bosom of the Father. "This," says Dr. Harwood (Soc. Scheme, p. 32,) "is so direct, positive, and solemn an assertion of the pre-existence of our Saviour from the mouth of our blessed Lord himself, that I see not what criticism can evade it. The ancient Socinians indeed framed a hypothesis that our Lord after his baptism was caught up into heaven. But this journey to paradise, which has so much the air of a Mahometan tale, has no existence in the sacred page."—"Nothing can be more unreasonable and groundless," says Dr. Clarke (Script. Doct. p. 84, No. 574,) "than the Socinians' interpretation of this passage, who *feign* that Christ was taken up into heaven, as Moses of old into the mount, to receive his instructions, and then came down again to preach." Perhaps a Socinian might justly retort upon these learned divines, that his fiction is at least as probable as the Arian fiction of a created Logos, who, being invested with such stupendous powers as to supersede the Deity himself in the creation, support, and government of the universe, reduced himself afterwards, by a metamorphosis more wonderful than any recorded by the Roman poet, to the condition of a senseless and helpless infant. But it is time to abstain from harsh language and injurious reflections. These are not the weapons by which this important contest is to be decided, and the battle won.

who is in heaven, who is instructed in the gracious purposes of God to man[36]."

The true sense of the whole text may therefore be expressed thus:

No one has ever been admitted to a participation of the divine counsels, except the Son of Man, Jesus of Nazareth, who has been commissioned to reveal the will of God to men, and who is perfectly instructed and qualified for this office.

This text seems to be exactly parallel to John i. 18: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of his Father, he hath declared him."

q. d. No one knows the purposes of God, but his faithful servant and messenger Jesus Christ, who is instructed in his counsels, and has revealed his will.

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[36] This interpretation of the text is not peculiar to the Unitarians. Le Clerc says, "Il faut expliquer ceci comme l'expression *monter au ciel:* c'est à dire, de la connoissance que Notre Seigneur avoit reçue des secrets du ciel. Voyez ch. i. 18." Dr. Campbell also refers to the same text, which he explains in a similar way: "By the expression ὁ ων εις τον κολπον, 'who is in the bosom of the Father,' is meant not only who is the special object of the Father's love, but who is admitted to his most secret counsels. By ὁ ων εν τῳ ϑρανῳ, 'who is in heaven,' is meant whose abode, whose residence, whose home is there."

To the same purpose, Matt. xi. 27, "All things are delivered to me by my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

q. d. The Father has communicated to the Son his whole will; and no one knoweth the extent of the Son's commission but the Father. Nor is any one instructed in the mind and will of God but the Son, and those who are taught by him[37].

From this illustration of the text the following conclusions are deducible.

1.] That the phrase 'to descend from heaven' does not necessarily and universally signify a local descent.

2.] That this phrase, according to our Lord's own interpretation and use of it, Matt. xxi. 25, sometimes expresses nothing more than coming with a divine commission and authority.

3.] It is therefore no perversion of plain language to understand and explain these words in this sense; the sense in which our Lord himself explained them.

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[37] See Improved Version. "Monstrat orationis series agi de mysteriis ad salutem humanam pertinentibus, quorum revelatio Filio est credita." Grotius. See likewise Le Clerc in loc.

4.] That from the phrase 'he came down from heaven,' no argument can be derived in favour of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, unless these words occur in a connexion which makes it absolutely necessary to understand them in a literal and local sense[38].

IV.

John iii. 31. "He that cometh from above is above all: He that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all."

'He that cometh from above' or 'from heaven,' is he who cometh with a divine commission and authority. 'He that is of the earth' is a teacher who has no pretensions to such authority,—the priests and Levites who instructed the people and expounded the law. Their instructions were fallible and imperfect: those of

[38] No stress is laid (though possibly it might bear an argument) upon the absurdity of the Jewish notion of a local heaven above the firmament, where God and angels reside, and where Jesus is supposed to have existed previously to his incarnation. Modern discoveries in astronomy amply refute this puerile hypothesis. God is at all times equally and every where present. And heaven is a state, and not a place. To be perfectly virtuous and perfectly happy is to be in heaven, whatever be the local situation of the being in question.

Jesus, the prophet of the Most High, were infallible and divine.

Or, as Mr. Lindsey supposes, perhaps the Baptist may refer to himself and to former prophets and messengers of God, and may mean to speak modestly and disparagingly of his own authority and commission from God, in comparison with that of Jesus, which was indeed far more illustrious and divine. See Mr. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 217; and Grotius in loc.

V.

John vi. 33. "The bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world."

Ver. 35. "I am that bread of life."

Ver. 38. "For I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Ver. 42. "They said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know; how is it then that he saith, I come down from heaven?"

Ver. 62. "What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?"

As the greatest possible stress is laid by the advocates for the pre-existence of Christ upon

the expressions which our Lord uses in this discourse, it is necessary to consider them in their connexion.

It has been already proved that 'to come down from heaven' is a phrase not unfrequently used to express coming with divine authority. The only question therefore is, whether there is any thing in the connexion in which the words occur in this discourse which limits their signification to a local descent.

After the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus crossed the sea of Galilee; and the next day the multitude followed him, with a determination to compel him to assume the title of king. The miracle he had wrought convinced them that he was the Messiah, and that he was able to deliver their country from the tyranny of the Roman government. Jesus, knowing their mean and secular views, resolved to release himself from these selfish and unworthy attendants; and for this purpose he delivers a discourse which they could not comprehend, and the design of which was to shock their prejudices, to disgust their feelings, and to alienate them from his society.

Ver. 25. The multitude, having found him,

begin the conversation with the question, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"

Ver. 26, 27. Jesus declines giving a direct answer, and reproves their selfish and secular motives:

"Verily, ye seek me not because ye saw miracles, but because ye ate of the loaves. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you, for to him the Father, that is God, hath given his attestation [39]."

Ver. 28. They then asked him, "What are the works which God requireth us to do?"

Ver. 29. "Jesus answered, That ye believe on him whom God hath commissioned."

Ver. 30, 31. "They replied, What miracle doest thou, that seeing it we may believe thee? Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

The Jews expected that when the Messiah came, he would be made known by some public visible sign from heaven. See Matt. xvi. 1;

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[39] See Dr. Campbell's Translation.

xxiv. 3. 1 Cor. i. 22. This is what the multitude now ask for. Notwithstanding the great miracle of the loaves, they are not perfectly satisfied till they obtain this visible sign; which they are the more encouraged to expect, as Moses actually exhibited a sign of this description, *viz.* the manna which descended from heaven.

Ver. 32, 33. "Jesus said to them, Moses did not give you that bread from heaven; but my Father is giving you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which is descending from heaven, and giveth light to the world."

Jesus here speaks figuratively. He means the doctrine of eternal life which he was commissioned to teach. But he uses ambiguous language, which the multitude understood literally, and expected the immediate descent of some species of food better than the manna which Moses had given to their ancestors.

Ver. 34. "They said to him, Master, give us always this bread."

Ver. 35—40. Jesus now confounds and perplexes their understandings by speaking of himself personally as the promised bread from heaven:

"Jesus answered, I am the bread of life.

He who cometh to me shall never hunger, he who believeth on me shall never thirst. All whom the Father giveth me will come to me. But I descended from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of him who sent me, that whoever acknowledgeth the Son, and believeth on him, should obtain eternal life, and that I should raise him up at the last day."

Jesus is the bread from heaven—but this bread is his doctrine, as all allow,—his person therefore is here put for his doctrine, which like manna comes from heaven. But having mentioned himself personally, he speaks of a personal descent from heaven, that is, as has been already proved, of a divine mission. But the Jews, taking the whole literally, are puzzled to account for his singular and, as they thought, extravagant language.

Ver. 41, 42. "The Jews murmured against him, because he said I am the bread which descended from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know[40]; how then doth he say, I descended from heaven?"

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[40] Observe how currently Jesus is spoken of as the son of Joseph, and as one whose father and mother were well known: and

Ver. 43—51. Jesus continues to assert the divinity of his mission and the vivifying power of his doctrine, in language still more offensive and unintelligible to the multitude:

"Jesus therefore answered, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come unto me unless the Father who hath sent me draw him, and him I will raise up at the last day. Every one who hath heard and learned from the Father cometh unto me. Not that any man, except him who is from God, hath seen the Father. He that believeth on me hath eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, and died. This is the bread which is descending from heaven, that whoso eateth thereof may not die. I am the living bread which descended from heaven. Whoso eateth of this bread shall live for ever: and the bread which I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Our Lord first states plainly that he had a

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this without any remark by the evangelist to caution his readers against the popular error concerning his nativity, which surely he would have done if he had known any thing of our Lord's miraculous conception, especially as he had omitted that fact in his history.

mission from the Father, and that all who practically believed his doctrine should be entitled to eternal life. He then expresses the same sentiments in figurative language. Moses gave manna from heaven, he gives bread from heaven—those who ate manna were mortal, those who eat his bread are immortal—nay, he is himself this life-giving bread—to become immortal they must eat him, his very flesh, which he is ready to impart to them for this purpose.

What can this mean, but that he was ready freely to impart his heavenly doctrine? But the Jews, understanding him literally, are lost in astonishment at the extravagance of his discourse.

Ver. 52. "The Jews then debated among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Ver. 53—58. Jesus, knowing their mean and secular motives, and desirous of being forsaken by them, does not condescend to correct their mistake, but proceeds to express himself in language still more offensive and disgusting:

"I say unto you, Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth my flesh and

drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him again at the last day. For my flesh is truly meat, and my blood is truly drink. He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the Father liveth who sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me. This is the bread which descended from heaven. It is not like the manna which your fathers ate, for they died. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."

It is universally agreed that the meaning of our Lord in this highly figurative passage is, that the man who receives, digests, and practically improves his divine and heavenly doctrine, shall be raised by him to everlasting life. This doctrine he compares to bread from heaven, from God, far excelling the manna which their fathers ate. He further compares it to his own person, his flesh, his blood; which bread, which person, which flesh and blood descending from heaven, will make those who eat and drink it immortal.

The Jews observing the seriousness and solemnity of our Lord's manner, and understanding his declarations in a strict literal sense, are more offended and disgusted than ever, and re-

solve to forsake his society, probably conceiving him to be disordered in his mind[41]!

Ver. 60. "Many of his disciples having heard it, said, This is hard doctrine, who can bear it?"

This is such extravagant unintelligible raving, that it is impossible to endure it any longer.

They did not speak out: but Jesus judged from their looks and whisperings what passed in their minds: and in order to fix them in their purpose of leaving him, he adds one more remark in the same strain, which served to confirm them in their former opinion:

Ver. 61—62. "Does this offend you? What then, if you should see the Son of Man ascending thither where he was before[42]?"

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[41] Our Lord's own friends and near relations suspected him at times to be beside himself. Mark iii. 21. See 2 Cor. v. 13. And his enemies repeatedly, publicly, and without any regard to decency, charged him with insanity. John viii. 48, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" *q. d.* a blasphemer and a madman. John x. 20, "Many said, He hath a demon and is mad, Why hear ye him?" *q. d.* Why do you listen to a man that is raving mad? Ver. 21: "Others said" more justly, "These are not the words of him that hath a demon," *q d.* of a madman. "Can a demon," *q. d.* a madman, "open the eyes of the blind?" See Improved Version, in loc.

[42] This text has always been considered as the strong hold of Arianism, the primary argument for the pre-existence of Jesus

q. d. Are you so disgusted with what I have said, as to be upon the point of deserting me, after all your professions of regard: What then

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Christ; and the glosses as they are called, of the Socinians and Unitarians, by which they evade what is stated to be the plain obvious meaning of the text, are animadverted upon with no light degree of severity. And Unitarians themselves have appeared almost to despair of giving a satisfactory explanation of it.

Dr. Price, in the Appendix to his Sermons, p. 392, says: "I must think this text as decisive a declaration of Christ's pre-existence by himself as words can well express. Were I, what some of my best friends wish to see me, a Socinian, I should probably in this case, instead of seeming to wrest a plain text, either give it up and own a difficulty, or with a magnanimous openness, like that of Dr. Priestley in objecting to the authority of Moses and Paul, question the propriety of building an article of faith, of such magnitude, upon the correctness of John's recollection and representation of our Lord's language."

But with the permission of this able and candid writer, our Lord's language by no means necessarily implies his pre-existence, even if it should be taken in its literal acceptation: for in this sense it better expresses the Socinian hypothesis of a personal ascent to heaven previously to his public appearance, than the Arian notion of a pre-existent Logos. It seems to have escaped the attention of the learned advocates for Arianism, that it is the Son of Man, not the Son of God, it is Jesus in his human form, that is spoken of as having been in heaven before. There is no occasion, therefore, at any rate, to have recourse to the supposition of a lapse of memory in the evangelist. The interpretation proposed above appears to me to explain the text satisfactorily without the supposition of a local ascent: but it is offered with diffidence to the candid and inquisitive reader, as the author does not recollect to have met with it before, though Le Clerc seems to hint at something similar. To the deeply preju-

would you say, if, after having eaten my flesh and drunk my blood, you should see me in my own person ascending up to heaven again, from whence, as I told you, I the bread of life came down?

This language must have appeared to our Lord's selfish and ambitious followers, who understood it all in a literal sense, more absurd and extravagant than any thing which they had heard before; and would no doubt fix them in their resolution to renounce all connexion with him.

It is, however, highly probable that our Lord still intended the same thing by the same figurative expressions. By his person, the Son of Man, he still means his doctrine. By ascending up where he was before, *i. e.* to heaven, he still means the knowledge of sublime and mysterious truths, beyond the reach of common apprehension.

The sense then appears to be this: Are you offended at what I have already taught: What would you say if I were to reveal truths still

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diced, and to those who are not accustomed to judge of the sense of a passage by the connexion and context, it will necessarily appear harsh and unnatural. To the judgement of the calm, serious, and impartial inquirer it is now submitted.

more foreign to your conceptions, and more offensive to your prejudices?

Exactly corresponding with this is our Lord's remark to Nicodemus: John iii. 12, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

This will be called a forced interpretation. And it is certainly very different from the plain literal meaning of the words. But it is most agreeable to the connexion. It is nothing more than a continuation of the same allegory, in which, throughout, our Lord's doctrine is represented by him as 'bread from heaven,' as 'living or life-giving bread,' as 'himself,' as 'his own flesh and blood,' which must be eaten and drunk in order to secure immortal life.

Seeing the offence which his discourse had already given, what could be more suitable to his design than to add, What if I should speak truths which would be still more obscure and offensive? or, in the language of the allegory, What if you see me the Son of Man (*i. e.* my doctrine) ascend to heaven where I was before, *i. e.* go further out of your reach, and become still more perplexing and mysterious?

Thus the text appears not as an insulated

remark unconnected with the context; but as an observation appropriate to the occasion, and couched in language similar to what he had already used; not more harsh than the tenor of the preceding discourse, but made purposely obscure and offensive, that "seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand." Luke viii. 10.

It is obvious to remark that the words taken in this sense have no relation to the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

Also, if this be the true interpretation, there is no reference in the 62d verse to our Lord's local ascension; nor in the preceding discourse is there any allusion either to his death, or to his supposed atonement, or to the institution of the eucharist. The whole discourse relates to his divine and heavenly doctrine only.

At the conclusion, our Lord suggests a hint that his language was to be taken in a figurative and not in a literal sense.

Ver. 63. "It is the spirit that giveth life: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

q. d. It is the hidden meaning of my ænigmatical discourse which alone is useful. If you could actually eat my flesh it would do you no

good. The doctrine which I teach is that heavenly bread, that flesh and blood, which if received, digested, and reduced to a living principle of action, will lead to everlasting life.

This declaration of Christ is a key to the whole preceding discourse. But the selfish and ambitious persons who were in his train were too much disgusted with what they had already heard, to listen to any explanation. They found that Jesus was not the man to take the lead in a political revolution. Their ambitious projects were disappointed, and they abandoned his party.

Ver. 66. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

This was what our Lord desired. He was now deserted by those who had followed him from mercenary and political motives only. He was no longer teased to assume a secular crown: and he was left in privacy with the apostles and a few others whom he had selected, and whom he gradually instructed and qualified to propagate his gospel in the world.

VI.

John viii. 42. "If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded and am come

from God. I came not of myself; but he sent me."

Dr. Whitby and Dr. Doddridge think that in these words there is an allusion to the eternal generation of the Son; the word εξελθειν, *to proceed*, not being applied to any other apostle or prophet.

But as it is said of Jesus, that 'he was in the beginning with God,' to express his divine instruction and commission, so the expressions 'he proceeded,' or 'came out from the Father' and came to mankind, very naturally indicate that he was the chosen messenger of God to the human race[43].

The last clause explains the preceding. Compare John xiii. 3; xvi. 27, 28. 30.

VII.

John viii. 58. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born[44], I am."

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[43] Εξηλθον και ηκω· *q. d.* εξελθων ηκω, 'a Deo missus sum.' Grotius. See Lardner on the Logos, p. 21.

[44] *Before Abraham was born.*] πριν Αβρααμ γενεσθαι, εγω ειμι. So Arrian Epict. πριν Ιπποκρατη γενεσθαι, 'before Hippocrates was born.' Raphel. in loc. who cites other parallel instances from Herodotus. Πριν γενεσθαι ημας, 'before we were born.' Platon. Phædon. See Wolfius, and Archbishop Newcome.

This text is held up as a triumphant argument for the deity, or at least the pre-existence, of Jesus Christ.

1. "I that am truth itself," says Dr. Guyse in his paraphrase upon the text, "assuredly tell you that how young soever I be, yet before Abraham was born, and before all worlds, I had a real existence, as the unchangeable I AM, who ordered Moses to speak of me to your fathers under that name."

"Something more is implied," says Dr. Sherlock (Disc. vol. iv., on Philip. ii. 6,) "in the expression I AM, than that he had long existed before his coming into the world; something peculiar, as we may learn from the original use of the words, they being the very same which God made choice of to express his own eternity and power, when Moses inquired after his name. Now what could tempt our Saviour to use and apply this expression to himself, when he knew that it had never been applied to any but God?"

"I cannot imagine," says Dr. Doddridge in his Note upon this text, "that if our Lord had been a mere creature, he would have ventured to express himself in a manner so nearly bor-

dering upon blasphemy, or have permitted his beloved disciple so dangerously to disguise his meaning."

After the solemn appeal of these grave and learned men to this text as a decisive proof of the deity of Christ, who would suspect that, when our Lord made the declaration upon which this important conclusion rests, there is no reason to believe that he had the slightest allusion to the text in Exodus iii. 14, without which every appearance of argument vanishes away?

The truth is, that the translators of the Old Testament having rendered erroneously a passage in Exodus, and the translators of the New Testament having also mistranslated a text in John; from a combination of the two, the unlearned or inadvertent reader draws a conclusion still more erroneous and pernicious than either or both the others.

When Moses asks by what name he shall describe the Almighty to the Israelites; God answers him, Exod. iii. 14, "I will be what I will be,"—a phrase expressive of the immutability of the divine nature and counsels: which the public version renders, "I am that I am." In the text in John, our Lord says to the Jews, "Before Abraham was born, I was," for so it must be

rendered in order to make sense, as expositors generally allow. But the public version renders the words, "I am;" which, being connected in idea with the same words in the English version in the book of Exodus, have led to the conclusion that our Lord assumed a title peculiar to the Supreme Being: he is therefore God, equal to, or one with, the Father.

It is plain that no such inference would have been thought of had the translation of the two passages been more correct. Nor can it be reasonably alleged that the words of our Lord are a citation from the Septuagint version and not from the Hebrew original. For the words in the LXX. are Εγω ειμι ὁ Ων. "I am the Being." And such would probably have been the words of the evangelist, had he intended to express in Greek an allusion to this text, which our Lord had delivered in his native, that is the Syro-chaldaic tongue[45].

[45] This supposed allusion of our Lord to the declaration in Exodus is not noticed either by Calvin or Beza, though the former understands it as an assertion of his divine nature. The latter indeed appears to incline to refer the expression to the divine decree concerning Christ as mediator: "Quatenus est oculis fidei visus ab Abrahamo—alioqui non videretur Christus apposite disserere." Neither the LXX. translation nor the Latin Vulgate would be likely to lead any one into the same error into which the English version leads an English reader. The LXX. is cited

2. "Before Abraham was born I existed."

The present tense of the substantive verb is sometimes used for the past. John xiv. 9, "Have I been (ειμι, am I,) so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" Psalm xc. 2, "Before the mountains were brought forth thou wert (συ ει, thou art,) God." John v. 13, "He that was healed knew not who it was," (τις εστι, who it is.) In other verbs the present is also sometimes used for the preterite. John viii. 25, "They said to him, Who art thou? Jesus said unto them, Even what I told you at first," (λαλω, I tell.) See also John xii. 9; xv. 27; xx. 14; xxi. 4. 12. Acts ix. 26[46].

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above. The Latin Vulgate reads, "Ego sum qui sum: sic dices filiis Israel, *Qui est* misit me ad vos." Indeed the supposed allusion of our Lord to the words in Exodus, is so palpably groundless, and so completely abandoned by all learned and judicious critics, that one cannot help wondering that so enlightened and liberal a writer as Archbishop Newcome should have given any countenance to it.

[46] Newcome in loc. "Εγω ειμι, præsens pro imperfecto: eram. εγω πελον. Nonnus. Sic in Græco. Ps. xc. 2." Grotius.—"I am, that is, I was." Bishop Pearce, who observes in his note that the present tense is sometimes used for the preterite, and refers to John viii. 25; i. 18. Matt. xxiii. 39. and his notes upon them. "Le présent se prend souvent dans l'Ecriture pour l'imparfait, qui est un tems dont les langues Orientales manquent." Le Clerc.—"I assure you in the most solemn manner, I existed before Abraham drew the breath of life." Harwood.—"The peculiar use of the present tense in the usage of scrip-

The Jews evidently understood the language of Jesus as an assertion of his existence before the birth of Abraham; for in the paroxysm of their rage they took up stones to stone him as a liar and a blasphemer.

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tural expression is to imply determination and certainty, as if he had said, My mission was settled and certain before the birth of Abraham." Wakefield.—"The words may be rendered, I was. The present for the imperfect, or even for the preterperfect, is no unusual figure with this writer." Campbell.—"Dixerat prius, diem suam ardenti desiderio expetitum fuisse ab Abraham. Quia hoc Judæis incredibile erat, subjecit se tunc quoque fuisse." Calvin.

The expositors and critics are almost unanimous in giving to the words εγω ειμι the sense of past time. Nevertheless a learned writer in the Theological Repository, vol. iv. p. 350, objects, "If it be said that εγω ειμι may be translated *I was*, this appears to me more easily asserted than proved. Indeed the present tense of ειμι in Greek and of *sum* in Latin may in some instances be translated *have been*, but I imagine in those only where the present time is taken in with the past, and a continuance of being is implied." And Dr. Carpenter, in his Letters to Mr. Veysie, p. 246, remarks, that "for the interpretation which requires εγω ειμι, *I am*, to have the sense of *I was*, no justification appears in the writings of John, at least, if in any part of the New Testament."

The learned reader will judge how far the evidence alleged supports the general sense of critics and expositors, that the present tense is here used to express what is called the imperfect, *I am*, for *I was*.

It is observable that in the text above cited, John v. 13, the Cambridge manuscript for τις εστιν reads τις ην. The Vulgate, the old Italic, and Beza, translate "quis *esset*."

This text is regarded by the supporters of the Arian hypothesis as a decisive proof of the pre-existence of Christ; and the Unitarian exposition of it is treated by them with great contempt[47].

"The Socinian interpretation of this passage," says Dr. Clarke, (Scrip. Doc. No. 591.) " is

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[47] Dr. Harwood in his Observations on the Socinian Scheme, p. 42, allows himself great freedom and warmth of language upon this subject. " That plain declaration," says he, " of our Saviour to the Jews, that before Abraham was, he had an existence, will, I think, for ever stand in full force against all the acumen of criticism, and sagacity of refinement, which may be employed to invalidate and explain away its natural and obvious signification. The interpretation that our Lord had an existence in the divine decree before Abraham, and that it was before the times of this patriarch fore-ordained that he should appear in such an age and state of the world, is extremely *forced* and *futile*, and does not discriminate our Lord from thyself, O reader, who hadst from eternity an existence in the divine decree. It is plain that our Saviour's audience took these words in their natural acceptation; for, upon his asserting to them that he was in being before their great ancestor, they were instantly transported with fury against him as a blasphemer and impostor, and took up stones with a design to murther him. These actual violences of the Jews prove, I apprehend, better than a thousand inane and chimerical theories, how our Redeemer was understood, and intended to be understood."

After all, notwithstanding this fine declamation, the Jews might, for any thing that appears, misunderstand our Lord's words, as unquestionably they did.

very languid and unnatural, that Christ was before Abraham in the foreknowledge and appointment of God. The plain meaning is, that he was really with God in the beginning, and before the world was."

This language is rather too confident, especially as the learned advocate of this high-Arian or semi-Arian hypothesis has not condescended to state his objections to the Unitarian interpretation. The venerable bishop Pearce has given his explanation of the text in less offensive terms. "What Jesus here says relates, I think, to his existence antecedent to Abraham's days, and not to his having been the Christ appointed or foretold before that time: for if Jesus had meant this, the answer would, I apprehend, not have been a pertinent one. He might have been appointed, foretold, for the Christ; but if he had not had an existence before Abraham's days, neither could he have seen Abraham, nor could Abraham have seen him[48]."

In his own liberal and gentle spirit, Dr. Price,

[48] The learned prelate conjectures that the evangelist wrote Αβραμ εωρακε σε, "did Abraham see thee?" which he thinks would best suit the connexion: but his conjecture is unsupported by any authority.

in his Discourses upon the Person of Christ, p. 135, makes the following observations upon the Unitarian interpretation of this text:

"The interpretations which the Socinians give of these texts are such as cannot easily occur to any plain man. By saying that he existed before Abraham, they think that he only meant that his existence was intended before Abraham: and by the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, they understand the glory which he had in the divine foresight and appointment before the world was. I must own to you that I am inclined to wonder that wise and good men can satisfy themselves with such explanations. But I correct myself. I know that Christians, amidst their differences of opinion, are too apt to wonder at one another, and to forget the allowances which ought to be made for the darkness in which we are all involved. Sensible of this truth, and hoping to be excused if I should ever express my conviction in too strong language, I proceed to recite to you some other texts[49]."

[49] It is curious to observe how Dr. Clarke, Dr. Price, and Dr. Harwood are led away by the notion that the Socinian interpre-

It cannot, I think, be denied that the words of our Lord in this declaration to the Jews, will, when considered in their grammatical import and construction, bear the sense which the Arian expositors annex to them, and in which the Jews appear to have understood them.

But against this interpretation it may be alleged, that the word εἰμι, even when used absolutely, very rarely, if ever, expresses simple existence[50]; that it is not probable that our Lord would have been so very open and explicit upon this high and mysterious subject to his enemies, when he was so reserved to his friends, and does not appear to have hinted it even to his disciples[51]; that if he had intended

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tation is languid, forced, and unnatural, without assigning any reason why they think so, and without reflecting that a sense which, from established associations, may appear most obvious and natural to one, may to another, whose train of associations is different, appear forced and far-fetched. The bishop of Rochester does not fall into this error.

[50] "By interpreting εἰμι as meaning *to exist*, they take it in a sense different from its most common acceptation, and from the meaning in which it is used in every instance in which it occurs in this very chapter." Simpson's Essay ix. p. 105.

[51] "Did we not daily experience," says an excellent writer, (Mr. Lindsey) in the Comment. and Essays, vol. i. p. 408, "the power of prejudice to darken our understandings, and hinder us from seeing the most palpable contradictions, one might be surprised that any could ever suppose our Lord to be so very open

in this instance to announce his own pre-existence so very explicitly as many believe, he would have taught this extraordinary doctrine more frequently, in a greater variety of phrase, and would have laid greater stress upon it; and finally that this fact, so solemnly declared, would have been more attended to, and would have made a more permanent and vivid impression. It would have been a subject of general conversation and scrutiny, of admiration, or offence. Whereas the idea of such a claim on the part of our Lord vanished immediately. The disciples did not notice it. The Jews did not repeat it. And it is not alleged as a charge against our Saviour that he arrogated this extraordinary attribute. It is probable therefore that Jesus did not mean to be understood in the sense in which the Jews did or pretended to apprehend him, and for which the Arian expositors contend. Another sense may be given to our Lord's declaration, which is liable to

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and familiar with those Pharisees, his most bitter adversaries, as to tell them such a wonderful secret concerning himself, that he was the I AM, Jehovah, the eternal God, as some construe his words, or according to others, that he had existed with God from the beginning, before the world was, at the same time that he kept his disciples quite in the dark about things so prodigious and extraordinary."

fewer objections, and which is perfectly consistent with the proper humanity of Christ.

3. " Before Abram shall become *Abraham*, I am *he*," *i. e.* the Christ.

It was promised to Abraham that he should be the father of many nations; and, as a pledge of the accomplishment of this promise, by special divine appointment his name was changed from Abram to Abraham. Gen. xvii. 4, 5. In this declaration to the Jews, our Lord solemnly avers, that before the accomplishment of this promise to Abraham he appears as the Messiah.

This explanation of the text was proposed, though not absolutely adopted, by Slichtingius, Wolzogenius, Stegman, and others of the old Socinians. It has been revived and defended by a writer in the Theological Repository, vol. iv. p. 348; and Dr. Carpenter, in his Letters to Mr. Veysie, p. 246, expresses his approbation of it. In favour of this interpretation it is stated, 1.) That the original word (γενεσθαι) does not necessarily refer to past time, but much more frequently, and in the writings of this evangelist uniformly, to that which is future[52]. 2.) That as the second clause is al-

[52] The word γενεσθαι occurs 38 times in the New Testament. In five passages only it signifies past time. Luke iii. 22; ix. 36.

lowed to be elliptical, so probably is the first; and the ellipsis cannot be better supplied than by this hypothesis. 3.) That this interpretation retains the proper sense of the present tense (*I am*) in the second clause, a sense which it bears uniformly in all other places where the words are used absolutely. That nothing but absolute necessity will justify a departure from this usage. And though it cannot be denied that in some instances the present indicative, *I am*, has the sense of the preterperfect, *I have been*, it does not appear that it is ever used for *I was*[53]. 4.) This interpretation connects well with the tenor of our Lord's discourse: Your father Abraham desired to see my day, he did see it, and rejoiced. "And verily I say, that the time for the accomplishment of what he foresaw is not yet arrived: for before Abram shall be Abraham, *i. e.* become the father of many nations, ac-

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Acts xxii. 17. Phil. i. 13. 1 Thess. i. 7. In John xiii. 19, the phrase προ του γενεσθαι is found, which is properly rendered 'before it shall come to pass.' And John xiv. 29, the very same words occur which are used in ch. viii. 53; πριν γενεσθαι, where they must refer to future time. "I have now told you before it come to pass." Theol. Rep. vol. iv. p. 348.

[53] See Note 46, p. 75.

cording to the import of his name, I am the Christ your Messiah[54]." 5.) This declaration of his superiority to Abraham best accounts for the violent rage of the Jews, who would rather have been disposed to treat our Lord with contempt, as a lunatic, if they had understood him as meaning nothing more than that he existed before Abraham was born.

To these arguments it is replied, 1.) That this solution is not necessary; for it is universally admitted that the common interpretation of the first clause is fully justifiable: and it is generally agreed that the authorities for giving a preterite signification to the latter clause are competent and satisfactory. 2.) If the proposed interpretation is just, the text ought to have stood thus: "before Abram shall become Abraham." The present ellipsis is too harsh, and the mode of supplying it quite arbitrary. 3.) The word Abraham always in the New Testament occurs as a proper name, and

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[54] Theol. Repos. vol. iv. p. 351. See also Slichtingius and Wolzogenius in loc. The latter seems to give the preference to this interpretation, which the former does not. Both these learned critics state at large the two Unitarian interpretations of this text, and neither of them seems to feel any difficulty in assigning to εἰμι a preterite signification.

is never used in a mystical sense[55]. 4.) It is a trifling proposition, and unworthy of the solemnity with which it is introduced, that Christ existed as the Messiah before an event which it was known was not to happen till many years or ages afterwards[56]. 5.) The connex-

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[55] "It being evident that the discourse is of Abraham's person, it is incongruous here to introduce a mystical sense of the word, which the Jews never thought of, and which had Christ intended, he would in all likelihood have said πριν Αβραμ γενεσθαι Αβρααμ." Whitby.

[56] "Ipsa Græca phrasis vel sola, satis refutat Socinianos, qui mirè torquent hæc verba, quasi Salvator id dicere voluerit, se jam esse antequam Abram factus sit Abraham, id est pater multarum gentium: quod contigit post ascensionem Christi. Solent isti homines valde ingeniosi et acuti haberi. Sed vere dicam in hujus loci explicatione ita versantur, ut acumen omne perdidisse, et obtusissimi esse videantur. Quid enim jejunius dici cogitarive potest, quam Salvatorem hoc sensisse, se jam esse, antequam ea fierent, quæ aliquot annis post futura erant? Nam quis sanus ita loquitur? Et quid hoc ad istud, propter quod Judæi Jesum, quasi blasphema locutum lapidibus obruere volebant." Raphel. Annot. tom. i. p. 651.

Now, without adopting the hard words of this learned and orthodox critic, it may surely be permitted to remark, that when our Lord thought fit publicly and plainly to announce to the Jews the offensive truth that he was himself their Messiah, it was hardly consistent with the dignity of his character, with the greatest solemnity of language to announce another fact, which every one present must have known as well as himself, *viz.* that if he really was the promised Messiah, he was such antecedently to an event which was then future. What would be thought of

ion with the preceding context is not very obvious. It is no reply to the objection of the Jews. Nor does it at all illustrate or vindicate our Lord's own assertion, "that Abraham had seen his day." The declaration, "I am the Messiah before the promises are fulfilled to Abraham," seems both insulated and irrelevant. 6.) It is an interpretation altogether novel, and unheard of till it was proposed by the Polish Socinians[57].

4. "Before Abraham was born, I was *he*:" *i. e.* the Christ.

q. d. Before that eminent patriarch was brought into being, my existence and appearance under the character of the Messiah at this period, and in these circumstances, was so completely arranged, and so irrevocably fixed in the immutable counsels and purposes of God, that in this sense I may be said even then to have existed.

This is the interpretation proposed by the

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a certain great personage, if he should say, "I solemnly aver that even before the princess Charlotte becomes queen of England, I am now prince of Wales." Num quis sanus ita loquitur?

[57] "This interpretation is contrary to all antiquity, as their (the Socinian) expositions in these cases use to be." Whitby.

Unitarians. It is that which Dr. Clarke calls "languid and unnatural;" which Dr. Harwood styles "forced and futile, inane and chimerical;" and at which Dr. Price "wonders." It remains to be considered whether it be scriptural and true.

1.) In the first place, this interpretation well accords with the connexion and context.

Our Lord declares, ver. 56, "Your father Abraham longed to see my day, and he did see it." The Jews, foolishly or perversely misrepresenting his language, ask, "Hast thou seen Abraham?" Our Lord never pretended that he had seen him: and not deigning to rectify this silly mistake, he goes on to establish the reasonableness of his assertion: *q.d.* Abraham did foresee my appearance, and the blessings of my kingdom. And this was possible: because though I was not then born, yet my appearance under the character of the Messiah, and all the happy consequences which flow from it, had been determined in the divine counsels long before that eminent patriarch was in existence.

2.) The words *I am* (εγω ειμι) must be understood to mean, and should be translated, *I was.*

The connexion of the words renders this construction necessary to the sense. 'Before such an event *I am*,' is without meaning, unless the event be future: and in this instance, if the event referred to be future, it has been shown that the assertion would be trivial, and unworthy of our Lord's character.

3.) The ellipsis must be supplied by the word *he*, *i. e.* 'he who cometh,' or, 'the Christ.' For it has been already stated that the verb ειμι is seldom if ever used to express simple existence. And wherever it occurs in this elliptical form, it is commonly, and very properly, supplied by the pronoun (αυτος) *he*. John iv. 26, "I who speak unto thee am *he*." John ix. 9, "The blind man said, I am *he*." John xviii. 5, "I am *he*," *i. e.* whom ye seek. Luke xxi. 8, "Many will come in my name, saying (εγω ειμι) I am *he*," or Christ. Compare Matt. xxiv. 5. Mark xiii. 6. Matt. xiv. 27. Mark vi. 50. John vi. 20.

The context in all cases easily determines the sense of the ellipsis. In the former part of this very discourse the phrase occurs twice, in a connexion in which the translators of the public version, being under no bias to the con-

trary, have supplied the ellipsis properly. Ver. 24, "If ye believe not that I am *he*, *i. e.* the Messiah, ye shall die in your sins." Ver. 28, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am *he*." It is the very same phrase which occurs in ver. 58; which ought therefore to have been translated in the same form. "Before Abraham was born, I was *he*," *i. e.* the prophet who was to come, the Messiah.

4.) In the language of the sacred writers, a being, or a state of things, is said to EXIST, when it is the ETERNAL IMMUTABLE PURPOSE OF GOD THAT IT SHALL EXIST, at the time and in the circumstances which his infinite wisdom hath chosen and ordained.

The apostle Paul expressly teaches concerning God, that "he calleth those things which are not, as though they were;" Rom. iv. 17: an observation which he applies to the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 5, "*I have made thee* a father of many nations," *i. e.* I have determined the future actual existence of this event.

1.] In the Old Testament nothing is more common than to express prophecy in the language of history, and to state future events as

present or even past. Thus Cyrus is addressed before his birth as though he were actually existing; Isaiah xlv. 1, "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, even to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden." And Babylon is represented as captured seventy years before the event; Jer. li. 41, "How is Sheshach taken, and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!"

These events at that time had no existence but in the divine purpose. Other future events are mentioned as already past. Exod. xv. 12—17. 1 Sam. xv. 28; xxviii. 17, 18. And in Isa. xlvi. 10, 11, the Supreme Being, in very sublime language, declares the absolute certainty of the accomplishment of his eternal purposes: "I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed it, I will also do it. My counsel shall stand."

This prolepsis, this anticipation of future events, is particularly remarkable in the prophecies which relate to the Messiah, who is frequently represented as actually existing, and executing his divine commission, many ages before his public appearance and ministry. Isa. ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us

a son is given." Ch. xlii. 1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him." And in that celebrated prophecy in the fifty-third chapter, the humiliation of the Messiah, his rejection and sufferings, are described throughout in the language of history. "He is despised and rejected of men. He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. He was cut off out of the land of the living[58]." chap. xlix. 5—10. The Messiah himself is introduced as speaking and stating the promise of God to him, that "he should be a light to the Gentiles, and salvation to the ends of the earth[59]." And again,

[58] The argument from the prolepsis is not at all invalidated if, as the Jews and some modern writers (to whose opinion however I do not accede) suppose, this prophecy is not applicable to the Messiah, but to Jeremiah, or to the present state of the Jewish nation.

[59] "The character and office of the Messiah was exhibited in general terms at the beginning of chap. xlii.; but here he is introduced in person, declaring the full extent of his commission, which is not only to restore the Israelites, but to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, to call them to the knowledge and obedience of the true God." Bishop Lowth in loc. See Cardale's True Doct. of the New Testament concerning Christ, p. 84—87.

chap. lxi. 1---3, " The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted," a prophecy which our Lord declares to have received its accomplishment in his own person: Luke iv. 21.

In these instances, and in other similar prophecies, the Messiah is described as actually invested with the insignia of his office, and performing its duties. To the Jews, therefore, who were familiar with the language and imagery of their own prophets, our Lord's declaration of his existence as the Messiah before the birth of Abraham would not sound so harsh and offensive as it does to modern readers; who, not being accustomed to the bold dramatic language of prophecy, are apt to understand that of actual existence which the Jews would easily perceive to be figurative. The prophetic representations in the Jewish Scriptures amply justify the language of Christ in reference to them. If the prophets describe the Messiah as contemporary with them, Christ might with propriety speak of himself under that character, as their contemporary. If Isaiah writes as having seen the Messiah, having heard his complaints, and

having been witness to his labours, his miracles, and his sufferings; our Lord might with equal propriety represent himself, under his official character, as having existed in the days of Isaiah. If Abraham saw his day; he, as the Messiah, must have co-existed with the patriarch, and, by parity of reason, before Abraham's birth. But all allow that the prophetic representations of the Messiah's existence are figurative: they only express what existed in the divine purpose, and imply nothing more than certainty of event. Let it then be granted, that when our Lord speaks of himself as the Messiah before Abraham was born, he means the same thing: that his language only implies that he was the Messiah in the divine purpose. No reasoning, I think, can be more conclusive.

2.] The same language of anticipation occurs in the New Testament, in which persons, and things, and states of things, are described as actually existing, which only existed in the divine mind and declared purpose; particularly those which relate to the Messiah, and the dispensation of the Gospel[60].

[60] "Nothing is more common with the writers of the New Testament than to represent those things as having had existence

Of this language a very remarkable instance occurs, Luke xx. 38. Our Lord argues against the Sadducees the doctrine of the resurrection, from the declaration of God to Moses, Exod. iii. 6, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living." And to obviate the objection that the patriarchs were now in fact dead, he adds, "for all live to him:" that is, As it is the determined purpose of God to raise them to life, they are in his all-comprehending view actually alive.

The Gospel and its blessings are represented as peculiarly the objects of the divine purpose and decree. Matt. xxv. 34, "Come, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." 1 Cor. ii. 7, "The mystery which God ordained before the world to our glory." Eph. iii. 9, "The mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God."

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from the beginning, which were always designed by God to come to pass, and were promised in the prophets. And as this was more especially the case in the Gospel, so we find it represented throughout the Scripture as having existed in the eternal counsels of the Almighty." Dr. Dawson at Moyer's Lectures, p. 68, 69.

This dispensation and its blessings had been promised and foretold by the prophets. Rom. i. 2, "The gospel of God which he had promised before by his prophets in the holy Scriptures." See also Acts xxvi. 22, 23. 1 Pet i. 10, 11.

Of this dispensation it was the divine purpose that Jesus should be the publisher, and the medium through which its blessings were to be conveyed to mankind. 1 Pet. i. 20, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28. John i. 44.

Hence he was the object of the Father's love —John xvii. 24, "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world"—and "had glory with the Father before the world was." ver. 5. And his violent death constituting an essential part of the divine plan, he is represented, Rev. xiii. 8, as "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

And the happy state of things under the dispensation of the Messiah being thus predestinated in the divine counsels, Abraham is represented as having actually seen them two thousand years before the birth of Christ. John viii. 56, "Your father Abraham desired to see my day; he saw it, and was glad." The

prophet Isaiah also "saw his glory." John xii. 41.

Believers are "chosen before the foundation of the world, and predestinated to the adoption of children," Eph. i. 4, 5: "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will," ver. 11.

And what is thus predestinated is described as actually accomplished from the beginning of time, 2 Tim. i. 9, "Who hath saved us—according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Our Lord describes his apostles as already in possession of the honour which he intended for them. John xvii. 22, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." And the apostle Paul represents virtuous believers in general, as already in possession of that felicity which God in his great wisdom and mercy has ordained for them. Rom. viii. 29, 30, "Whom he foreknew he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; whom he did predestinate, them he also called: whom he called, them he also justified: whom he justified, them he also glorified: *in purpose* glorified

is archbishop Newcome's translation, with whom agree Grotius, Locke, Doddridge, and others. John v. 24, our Lord declares, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." See also John vi. 47. 54.

From this induction it clearly follows that persons, things, and states of things, are not unfrequently described in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament as actually existing, when they exist only in the divine purpose and decree[61]. When therefore our Lord declares to the Jews, "Before Abraham was born I was *he*," the plain meaning is, I was marked out in the divine counsels as the Messiah.

5.) Though this interpretation is by some expositors rejected with contempt, it is not destitute of support from the authority of many able and learned critics and divines[62].

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[61] See Slichtingius and Wolzogenius in loc. Also Cardale's True Doctrine of N. T. p. 84—92. and Simpson's Dissert. Essay ix.

[62] Εγω ειμι, præsens pro imperfecto, *eram*. Syrus. Sic in Græc. Psalm xc. 2. "Fuerat autem ante Abrahamum Jesus, in divina constitutione." Rev. xiii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 20. Grotius in loc.—"Ego quamvis non existimem Christum hîc simpliciter agere de se, quatenus Deus est, sed quatenus est oculis fidei visus ab Abrahamo,

" This," says Dr. Lardner, (on the Logos, p. 14.) " may be thought a strong text for the pre-existence of our Saviour's soul. But really

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Dei videlicet hominum mediator, sive Deus in carne manifestatus, (nam alioqui non videretur Christus appositè disserere) tamen quia ut mediator considerari non potest, nisi vere sit Emmanuel, et hâc etiam ratione dicitur agnus à constitutione mundi occisus, imo vero Christus fuisse heri et hodie, putavi servandam esse antithesin." Beza in loc.

" Regessit Jesus eos multum falli in æstimanda ætate sua: nam, primo, se fuisse ab omni æternitate. Secundo, licet tricessimum multis annis superâsse non videretur, attamen de se in mundum mittendo, longe ante Abrahami tempora, decretum à Deo factum esse, quod cum benignè à Deo Abrahamo revelatum fuisset, se eâ quoque ratione, Abrahamo notum fuisse." Hammond in loc.

This reference, by Beza and Hammond, of the existence of Christ as mediator, to an existence in the divine decree, is the more remarkable, as the known orthodoxy of these expositors places them above all suspicion of partiality to Unitarian interpretations.

" Priusquam Abraham esset ego sum. Judæi ipsi dicunt, legem ac Messiam longe ante mundum conditum fuisse. Nam quæ a Deo destinata et constituta sunt, antequam rebus et factis ipsis exhibeantur, apud Deum esse dicuntur. Sic Joannes de vita æterna dicit: 1 Joh. i. 2. Hinc et Petrum Christum prægnitum dicit ante mundi constitutionem." Slichtingius in loc.

" Poterat Christus dicere se fuisse ante Abrahamum non actu sed divinâ prædestinatione ac constitutione. Vid. 1 Pet. i. 20. Atque hic sensus pulchrè convenit cum eo quod Christus supra dixerat Abrahamum vidisse diem suam. Neque est quod quis hanc responsionem vel explicationem textus frigidam vocet, propterea quod sic non Christus tantum sed omnia quæ in decreto

he there only represents his dignity as the Messiah, the special favour of God towards him, and the importance of the dispensation by him. It is a way of speaking resembling that in Rev. xiii. 8, "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world," explained by 1 Pet. i. 20, "who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." The Jewish people have a saying, that the Law was before the world was created. In like manner, the dispensation of the Messiah was before the dispensation of Abraham in dignity, nature, and design, though not in time."

"Before Abraham was born, I was." "I cannot see," says Mr. Cardale (True Doct. of New Test. p. 85,) "that this rendering must

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divino fuerunt, fuisse dici possunt antequam Abraham fieret. Observandum enim est Christum non simpliciter dicere se fuisse in Dei decreto antequam Abraham fieret, sed se fuisse Messiam. Itaque indicat Christus se ad hanc dignitatem tam sublimem, longe antequam Abraham nasceretur, Dei decreto esse designatum." Wolzogenius in loc.

"Notre Seigneur veut dire qu'il n'est pas surprenant qu'Abraham ait prevu le tems auquel Dieu avoit resolu de leur envoyer son Fils, parceque le Fils de Dieu étoit avant Abraham. Surquoi les interpretes sont partagés. Les uns entendent le verbe *J'étois* de la divinité éternelle qui a habité en Jesus Christ dans le tems marqué par la Sagesse divine: et les autres, entre lesquels est Theodore de Beza, de l'humanité mesme de Jesus Christ, qui étoit dans le decret de Dieu, qui appelle ce qui n'est pas, comme s'il étoit." Le Clerc in loc.

necessarily imply either his eternal generation or his actual existence before Abraham. But it should be rather understood, as I conceive, of God's eternal and wise designation or appointment of him to the office and work of a Saviour; when, in pursuance of ancient promise and prediction, he should be born into the world, and appear and act as the Messiah. Nor does this appear to me such a low and languid sense as some have represented it; but the only true, rational, and consistent one, and perfectly consonant to the sacred writings both of the Old and New Testament; where the spirit of God, who seeth the end from the beginning, often speaks of future things as already existing, or even as already past, to denote the certainty of their accomplishment." Isa. xlvi. 10; vii. 14. Rom. iv. 17.

"Our Lord," says Mr. Lindsey (Sequel, p. 222,) "without regarding the impertinent question of the Jews, goes on to confirm what he had before been saying concerning Abraham: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am:' that is, You need not be surprised at what I have asserted of the great account Abraham made of me; for I assure you, that before Abraham himself was born I

am he, or the Christ. Not that he actually existed before Abraham, but only in the destination and appointment of God, to whom all live who are in any future time to be brought into being."

"Jesus did not say," says Dr. Priestley in his Note upon the Text, 'either that he had seen Abraham, or that Abraham had seen him, but only his day:' All that he meant was, that as the future glory and happiness of the posterity of Abraham was connected with his kingdom, and that this had been intimated to Abraham, this kingdom of his must have been intended in the divine counsels before the time of Abraham. Christians are also said to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; Eph. i. 4: though it is certain they had no being at that time. But in the eye of God, whatever is to be may be said already to exist. With him a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years."

"It was determined," says Mr. Wakefield, in his Inquiry into the Opinions of Christian Writers, p. 129, "in the counsels of Providence, before the ages, before Abraham was; that the Messiah should appear, that Jesus of Nazareth should be the Messiah. So the

names of the true servants of God were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8. Events determined are often spoken of in Scripture as already accomplished. Matt. xvii. 11; xxvi. 45. This manner of speaking, with a view to the pre-determinations of the Deity, was customary among the Jews. '*Before the world was created* the Lord Jehovah created the Law, he prepared the garden of Eden for the just.' Targum of Jonathan on Gen. iii. 24."

"In the conversation, of which this clause is a part," says Mr. Simpson in his accurate Essay upon this Text, p. 112, "Jesus says, 'Your father Abraham earnestly desired to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.' This cannot signify that Abraham was alive while Jesus was speaking, or during any part of his ministry. The apostle Paul will assist us in the interpretation of this passage. Gal. iii. 8, he says, 'The Scripture having foreseen that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed before glad tidings to Abraham, saying, Through thee all nations shall be blessed.' Abraham's seeing the day of the Messiah, therefore, means only his having very general information of the previous divine purpose and

appointment that the Messiah should descend from him. In like manner, the clause 'Before Abraham was born, I was he,' signifies that previous to Abraham's existence God had appointed that Jesus should be the Messiah. Since every event from the beginning to the end of time, and throughout eternity, is present to the omniscient mind of the Deity, and since every thing which he appoints will certainly come to pass, his original appointments are represented in the language of Scripture as being actually fulfilled before the events really take place."

In the explanation of this important text it was thought necessary to be thus particular, because it is in a great measure decisive of the whole controversy: for, if this declaration does not establish the pre-existence of Christ, no other passage can. And the impartial reader will consider whether, when our Lord had declared, "Your father Abraham saw my day," meaning thereby in prophetic vision; and when, immediately afterwards, he assigns as a reason, "Before Abraham was born, I was he," it be not most reasonable, and most consistent with the connexion, to understand these words in the corresponding sense, not of real existence, but of existence in the divine purpose.

Further, As it appears to have been common with the sacred writers to represent persons and things as actually existing, which existed only in the divine counsels, it follows that wherever Christ or his glory is represented as existing previously to his appearance on earth, it may justly be understood of an existence in the divine purpose and decree only, unless the connexion necessarily determines it to the contrary signification.

VIII.

John xiii. 3. "Jesus knowing that he was come from God and went to God." See No. VI.

He came from God as the messenger of his will to mankind. See John i. 6. He was returning to God, having finished his embassy, to render an account of his mission.

Dr. Harwood (Soc. Sch. p. 45,) cites this text as decisive in favour of the pre-existence of Christ. Dr. Clarke, with more judgement, appeals to it (Scrip. Doct. No. 51,) only as a proof of the inferiority of the Son.

IX.

John xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Fa-

ther, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

It is here argued, that as the last clause clearly refers to a local ascent into heaven, so the first and corresponding clause ought in all reason to be understood of a prior local descent from the Father. Hence Arians and Trinitarians argue the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, and the Polish Socinians infer his ascent into heaven antecedently to his public appearance as a messenger from God.

On the other hand it has been urged, that "it is frequent with the best authors, and with the sacred writers in particular, when the same words are put in opposition to each other, to take the one in a literal, the other in a figurative sense. Matt. viii. 22, 'Let the dead bury their dead.'" So Jesus came into the world in a figurative sense as a messenger from God; but he left the world and went to the Father literally and locally when he ascended into heaven.

But it is better to take both clauses figuratively. As Jesus came into the world when he appeared in public as a messenger from God; so, conversely, he left the world and returned to the Father when his mission closed,

and he ceased to appear any longer as a public teacher [63].

X.

John xvii. 5. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

1. This text is understood by many Trinitarians as a petition to the Father from our Saviour in his divine nature, requesting that his human nature might be assumed to a participation of those honours which the divine nature had from all eternity possessed. The truth of this hypothesis it would be useless to discuss [64].

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[63] Slichtingius argues strenuously, from the opposition of the two clauses, the local ascent and descent of Christ. Wolzogenius, Grotius, and Mr. Lindsey, Comm. and Ess. vol. i. p. 395, contend for the figurative interpretation of the first, and the literal sense of the latter clause. It may be remarked, that in this text the Arians take both clauses in the same, *i. e.* the literal sense: and the Unitarians understand one literally, and the other figuratively. In John iii. 13, "Who hath ascended up into heaven but he that came down from heaven?" the Arians understand the first clause figuratively, and the second literally; whereas the Unitarians interpret both clauses figuratively. And surely it is always right to interpret the same words in the same sense, whether literal or figurative, where they occur in the same sentence, unless the connexion imperiously requires the contrary. Upon this principle, the figurative interpretation of both clauses in the present case appears the most eligible.

[64] "Nunc autem, O Pater, adsumito hanc mortalem naturam

2. By the advocates for the pre-existence of Christ, this text is understood as a prayer to be restored to that dignity and felicity which he possessed with the Father, before the foundation of the world, and of which he had voluntarily divested himself when he became incarnate.

This it is alleged is the natural obvious meaning of the words. If interpreted by the rules of sound criticism, they will bear no other sense. The words παρα σεαυτῳ, 'with thy own self,' are opposed to the words επι της γης, 'upon the earth,' in the preceding verse: and the words παρα σοι, 'with thee,' in the Scriptures and in all good writers, are used in a local sense to express 'in thy house,' 'in thy presence,' and the like; and never signify 'in thy purpose or decree[65].'

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ad participationem honoris et dignitatis et gloriæ, quâ antequam mihi hanc conjungerem naturam, ante creationem mundi, imo ab omni æternitate fruebar." Hammond in loc.—"Declarat se nihil adventitium cupere, sed tantum ut appareat talis in carne, qualis fuit ante conditum mundum." Calvin.—Dr. Whitby gives the same interpretation, which he supports by a quotation from Theophylact, "την ανθρωπινην μου φυσιν αγαγε εις την δοξαν, ην ειχον παρα σοι εγω λογος."

[65] See Numb. xxii. 9, "Who are the men that are (παρα σοι) with thee in thy house?" 1 Sam. xxii. 3, "Let my father and mother be (παρα σοι) with thee in thy house." "We shall re-

This text is held up by the Arian expositors as an unanswerable argument for the pre-existence of Christ, and the interpretation of the Unitarians is treated by them with very little ceremony.

" To suppose with the Socinians," says Dr. Doddridge, who agreed with the Arians in the belief of a created Logos, " that this refers only to that glory which God intended for him in his decrees, seems to sink and contract the sense far short of its genuine purpose."

" The Socinian interpretation of this passage," says Dr. Clarke (No. 607,) " is too much forced."

The value of such kind of observations has been already stated. Low and forced interpretations mean nothing more than interpretations to which these learned expositors had not been accustomed ; but which might nevertheless be true.

Dr. Harwood, as he is wont, uses language still more triumphant. " Was there no intima-

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ceive," says the mother of the seven martyrs, " the prize of virtue, and we shall be (παρα Θεῳ) with God :" *i. e.* in his presence. Joseph. Opp. tom. ii. p. 509. See Aristoph. Plut. vi. 394. Demosth. de Coron. § 25. Harwood Soc. Sch. p. 46—48.

tion," says he (Soc. Sch. p. 46,) "in the whole New Testament of the pre-existence of Christ, this single passage would irrefragably demonstrate and establish it. It is a plain solemn address to the Deity, that, since he had glorified his name upon earth, he would be pleased to re-admit him to that state of glory and happiness which he had possessed in his presence before the creation of the world. Upon this single text I lay my finger. Here I posit my system. And if plain words be designedly employed to convey any determinate meaning; if the modes of human speech have any precision; I am convinced that this plain declaration of our Lord, in an act of devotion, exhibits a great and important truth which can never be subverted or invalidated by any accurate and satisfactory criticism."

The learned writer adds in a note, "The solemnity with which I once heard Dr. Benson appeal to this text greatly affected me when I was a young man. Dr. Newcome also, the very learned and worthy bishop of Waterford, (afterwards archbishop of Armagh,) in a visit with which he condescended to honour me, insisted on this text as decisive."

These authorities are considerable. But au-

thorities, at least equally grave, may be produced on the other side. And the question must be determined by reason, not by authority.

3. "O Father, glorify thou me with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee," that is, in thy immutable purpose and decree, the glory which was intended for me "before the world was."

This is the sense in which the words are explained by the Polish Socinian expositors and by the modern Unitarians: and if this sense be admissible, no argument can be drawn from this text in favour of the pre-existence of Christ.

The great error of most expositors seems to be concerning the nature of that glory which was the object of our Lord's earnest petition upon this solemn occasion. It is commonly supposed that he solicits some personal benefit; some high distinction to be conferred upon himself as the reward of his obedience and sufferings. But this would have been a selfish request, unworthy of the dignity and disinterestedness of our Lord's character. The glory to which he aspired was that of fulfilling the purposes of his divine mission; of redeem-

ing mankind from the bondage of ignorance, idolatry, vice, and misery; and restoring them to the knowledge and love of God, and to the hope of immortality. That this is the true meaning of our Lord in this prayer, will appear from the following considerations:

1.) It is represented in Scripture as the glory of God, to will and to accomplish the virtue and happiness of mankind. Luke ii. 14, "Glory to God in the highest for peace on earth and good-will towards men." John xv. 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Phil. i. 11, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God." See also John xii. 28. 31, 32; xvii. 4. Rom. xv. 7.

2.) Christ himself represents the success of his doctrine as constituting his own true glory, and as the proper reward of his sufferings: John xii. 23. When the Greeks expressed a desire to be introduced to him, Jesus, in contemplation of the future triumphs of his gospel, saith: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

3.) This is the glory which Christ communicated to his apostles, and which they participated in common with the Father and himself. Ver. 22, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them."—To them he communicated the doctrine he had received from God. Ver. 8, "I have given them the words which thou gavest me."—To them he gave a commission similar to that which he had himself received from God. Ver. 18, "As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world."—To them he promised the holy spirit to qualify them for their work, and to ensure success to their exertions. John xiv. 16, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (advocate) who may abide with you for ever." Chap. xvi. 13, "When the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."—And this glory is conferred upon the apostles, that they may be associated with God and Christ in diffusing the blessings of the gospel. Chap. xvii. 22. 26, "That they may be one, even as we are one: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

4.) This glory of Christ as the instructor and redeemer of mankind, was the object of the divine eternal purpose. 2 Tim. i. 9, "According to his purpose and grace, which was given (*i. e.* intended and determined to be given) us in Christ Jesus before the world began." See also Eph. i. 5. 10; ii. 10.

5.) This glory of Christ, in the success of his gospel, and the universal extent of his spiritual dominion, is the subject of many prophecies and promises. See particularly Isa. liii. 10—12.

6.) This glory of Christ, in the recovery of mankind from sin and death, having been the object of the divine eternal and immutable purpose, and the subject of the divine promise, is represented by our Lord as what he possessed with the Father before the world was.

It has been already proved under Text VII. that such a prolepsis is not unusual; and that persons, things, and states of things, are not unfrequently represented, in the language of the sacred writers, as actually existing, when they exist only in the divine counsel and decree.

And the language which is here used by our Lord may justly be interpreted in this sense. It is not true that the preposition παρα with a dative case always has a local signification. When applied personally, it sometimes signifies 'in that person's estimation or account;' *viz.* 2 Pet. iii. 8, "One day is with the Lord (παρα Κυριῳ, 'in the account or estimation of the Lord,') as a thousand years[66]."

Further:—In this very prayer the prolepsis is repeatedly used, which justifies a similar interpretation of the fifth verse. Ver. 4, "I *have* finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Our Lord had not then completely finished his labours: See chap. xix. 30. Ver. 12, "None of them *is lost* but the son of perdition." Judas had not at that time destroyed himself. Ver. 22, "The glory which thou gavest me, I *have* given them." The successful discharge of their apostolic mission was an honour intended for them and promised, but of which they were not at that time actually in possession. Also, ver. 24, "That they may be with me where I *am*," *i. e.* am to exist hereafter;

[66] See also Rom. ii. 11; xi. 25; xii. 16, and Schleusner in verb. See Dr. Carpenter's valuable observations upon this text in his Letters to Mr. Veysie, p. 247—255.

"that they may behold my glory which thou *hast given* me," *i. e.* intended for me.

7. Hence we conclude, that the true interpretation of this celebrated clause in our Lord's valedictory prayer,—that which best suits the connexion, and which is most consistent with the dignity and disinterestedness of his character,—contains no proof of his pre-existence, but is perfectly compatible with his proper humanity. *viz.*

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy own self;" *q. d.* allow me to participate in that which is thy own greatest glory, "with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" the glory of recovering lost mankind to virtue and happiness, a glory which was intended and reserved for me in the eternal immutable counsels of infinite wisdom and benevolence.

Many expositors have explained the text in reference to the divine counsels and decrees; but few, if any, before Mr. Lindsey, appear to have given the right interpretation of the object of our Lord's dying request[67].

[67] "παρα σεαυτῳ in cœlo, opponitur enim ei επι της γης. τῃ δοξῃ ᾗ εἰχον, destinatione tuâ: ut 1 Pet. i. 20. Simile loquendi genus Eph. i. 3. Sic legem fuisse ante mundum aiunt Hebræi. παρα σοι, refer ad illud εἰχον, et intellige ut diximus in decreto

"This," says Dr. Lardner, (Log. p. 15,) "according to Jewish phraseology may be very well understood of the glory always designed for Christ by the immutable purpose of God. That our Lord had not before his nativity the glory which he here prays for, is apparent from the whole tenor of the Gospel, and from clear and manifest expressions in the context; for the glory which he now prays for is the reward of his obedience."

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tuo." Grotius.—"Sæpissime de rebus quæ a Deo certe constituta atque decreta sunt ut fiant, dicitur quasi jam actu ipso facta sunt. 2 Tim. i. 9. Col. iii. 1." Wolzogenius in loc.; who concludes a long note upon the text with these words of Augustin: "Ad hoc valet, quod ait, Et nunc glorifica me. Hoc est, sicut tunc, ita et nunc; sicut tunc in prædestinatione, sic et nunc perfectione. Fac in mundo, quod apud te jam fuerat ante mundum; fac in suo tempore, quod ante omnia tempora statuisti."

"Glorificari a Patre petit in cœlo. Ad quod votum suum impetrandum non adducit merita sua, ut qui ex officio fecisset quicquid fecisset, sed decretum Petri." Brennius.

"Cur non dicamus quod planum, quod certum, quod SS. Literis apertissime testatum est, Christum petere gloriam illam sibi dari, quæ sibi ante mundum conditum a Patre Deo illo uno destinata erat?" Slichtingius.

"Comme il s'agit ici de la gloire de l'humanité de Jesus Christ, car la divinité ne peut ni perdre, ni acquerir de la gloire dans le ciel, où il n'y a rien de sujet au changement: on ne peut pas douter, que Jesus Christ ne veuille parler du dessein que Dieu avoit de l'élever quelque jour à la gloire, avant que le monde fût créé." Le Clerc.

"What so proper," says Mr. Lindsey (Sequel, p. 243,) "for the holy and benevolent Jesus to ask at the close of life, as the success of that Gospel by which the virtue and happiness of mankind was to be promoted, which had been his sole aim and pursuit, for which he had lived, and for which he was about to die? To suppose him to pray for his own happiness and advancement, and to animate himself with a prospect of that from God, as is the common opinion of the glory he sought, would not be suitable to that perfection of moral character which we cannot but ascribe to him, nor acting up to that idea of that enlarged universal benevolence which seems to have actuated him."

"What propriety," says Dr. Priestley (in loc.) "could there be in Christ praying, as the reward of his sufferings, for the same state of glory which he had enjoyed before them? This would be to make it no reward at all. Whereas he now, very naturally, asks for that reward which had been promised to him when he should have fulfilled the conditions on which the promise was made."

XI.

John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Some expositors have strangely supposed that our Lord is here authoritatively claiming and insisting upon a right, in consequence of previous stipulations in the counsels of Heaven; and hence infer not only his pre-existence but even his divinity[68].

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[68] It is unaccountable that Dr. Doddridge should have fallen into this egregious error. He thus paraphrases the text: "O Father, permit me to say that I will, that is, I importunately ask it, and in consequence of the mutual transactions between us I am bold to claim it, and insist upon it as a matter of right," &c.

But this is nothing to the language of Dr. Guyse, whose exposition would lead us to conclude that the Father wished to be off his bargain, if the Son had not held him closely to the terms of the bond. "The upshot, O my Father, of my will and pleasure, which I insist on as matter of right, according to my purchase and thy agreement, is, that all whom thou hast given me may be admitted into my immediate presence in heaven, where I already am in my divine nature, and for ever shall be in my entire person," &c.

The learned Calvin, whose disciples these pious expositors professed to be, would have taught them better if they had consulted his Commentary: "*Velle* pro *optare* positum est: neque

No conclusion can be more unfounded. The word θελω, 'I will,' expresses nothing more than simple desire, 'I request.' Matt. xii. 38, "Master, we desire (θελομεν), to see a sign from thee." See also Mark vi. 25; x. 35.

'Father, I request that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am;' or, as Dr. Campbell renders it, 'where I shall be.' The present tense is used for the future, to denote the certainty of the event.

'That they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' That glory is described as actually given, which it was the purpose and determination of God to bestow. See ver. 5.

This glory, it has been proved already, was that of instructing and reforming the world. Our Lord prays that his apostles may be witnesses to the great success of his Gospel.

How low and unworthy of our Saviour's character, to suppose that he prays thus earnestly for nothing more than that his apostles might be admitted to see some personal honour with which he was to be hereafter adorned!

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enim præcipientis, sed rogantis, est oratio."—"This argument," says Dr. Campbell, "is built upon an Anglicism in their translations, for which the sacred author is not accountable."

" For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." *q. d.* In thine eternal counsels thou didst select me to the high honour of being the messenger of peace and good-will to mankind [69].

To love, in Scripture phraseology, is to select to peculiar privileges. Rom. ix. 11—13, " Before the children were born, having done neither good nor evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, it was said, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated;" *i. e.* I have chosen, without regard to personal merit, to grant privileges to Jacob which will be denied to Esau.

XII.

1 Cor. xv. 47. " The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven [70]."

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[69] " He prays that his apostles and followers may be partakers of his spiritual gifts, and contribute to the spreading of the Gospel, and promoting the virtue and happiness of mankind, in which he himself had been destined before all ages to be the prime instrument, and they to have the honour of being inferior workmen under him." Lindsey's Sequel, p. 257.

[70] ὁ δευτερος ανθρωπος ὁ Κυριος εξ ουρανου. The words ὁ Κυριος are wanting in the Ephrem, Clermont, and four other manuscripts in the Coptic, Ethiopic, Vulgate, and Italic

"He came originally from the heavenly world to which he is now returned." Doddridge.

The Polish Socinians, who believed that Christ after his ascension was advanced to a dignity superior to that of the highest angel, and was constituted vice-regent of the whole created universe, understand this text as asserting that the body of Christ was of celestial substance and origin[71].

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versions; in Origen, Basil, Gregory Nyssen and Nazianzen, Tertullian, Cyril, and others. It is said that they were introduced by Marcion. The words ὁ ϗρανιος are added at the end of the verse in two uncial MSS. and in the Vulgate and Ethiopic version: and they are cited by Ambrose, Augustin, Jerome, &c. The genuine reading perhaps is ὁ δευτερος ανθρωπος εξ ϗρανϑ, ὁ ϗρανιος. See Griesbach.—"Primus homo de terra, terrenus: secundus homo de cœlo, cœlestis." Vulgate.

[71] "Quasi dixisset apostolus, Secundus homo, nimirum, Dominus ille, ex cœlo, scilicet, est: habita nempe ratione corporis." Crellius.—This ingenious and learned writer proceeds to state the expedience and necessity that the body of Christ should be of heavenly substance. "So great a being," says he, "than whom no one is more nearly united to God, who is raised above all celestial spirits, so as to govern them all, God only excepted, annon decuit, immo annon etiam necesse fuit, cœlestem etiam naturam et angelicam, si non præstantiorem saltem parem, Dei autem ipsius naturæ simillimam et proximam adipisci?"

Slichtingius and Brennius, both of them men of great learning and ability, adopt the same strange interpretation. It is chiefly in this extravagant notion of the advancement of a human being

'The second man will be the Lord from heaven,' *i. e.* will descend from heaven to raise the dead. This is the interpretation of Newcome, Whitby, Alexander, and others, who, though themselves believers in the doctrine, do not regard this passage as asserting the pre-existence of Christ.

The Vulgate renders the text, "The first man was of the earth, earthy. The second man will be from heaven, heavenly."

This is not improbably the true reading; and the sense is, 'The first man, taken from the earth, was frail and mortal; the second man will descend from heaven in a heavenly form, and with immortal radiance and vigour.'

XIII.

2 Cor. viii. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

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to the government of the universe, and making him the object of religious worship, a doctrine which, as Dr. Price says, "would make Christianity itself incredible," that the Unitarians of the present day differ from the old Socinians; to whom, notwithstanding their gross error in this particular, they nevertheless look with great veneration, as the most enlightened critics and expositors of the age in which they lived.—ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, *i. e.* οὐρανιος, "cœlestis: habens jam corpus cœleste." Grotius.

No person, whose mind was not wholly preoccupied with a persuasion of the pre-existence of Christ, would ever dream of finding it in this text. If the fact were antecedently established, this passage might indeed be admitted as a graceful allusion to it: but it can never with any propriety be alleged as a proof. For when it is said of any man, that though he is rich he spends nothing, who in his senses infers from it that he existed before he was born? Upon this principle, every miser would have a claim to pre-existence. Dr. Clarke, with great propriety, takes no notice of this text in his arguments for the pre-existence of Christ. Others, with less judgement, have held it up as a decisive proof of this favourite doctrine, and have indulged to no little asperity of reflection upon those who thought differently.

"He was *rich*"—"rich," says Dr. Doddridge, "in the glories of the heavenly world, and in supreme dominion and authority there, yet for your sakes he became poor."

"Rich," says archbishop Newcome, "in the glories of the divine nature, he became poor by taking on him human nature, and appearing even in a humble state of life."

"Rich," says Dr. Harwood (Soc. Sch. p. 46,) "in his pre-existent state in glory, honour, and happiness, with a greatness of soul which can never be sufficiently extolled, he abdicated all this, and became poor. The apostle's argument upon this scheme only is cogent, apposite, and very elegant and persuasive. To interpret this of our Lord being rich in miracles, and becoming poor in them at his crucifixion, is such a jejune and forced criticism, as I imagine was never used to explain any author."

This lofty language is now become too familiar to excite alarm: and, as inquirers after truth, we are to consider not what the apostle's expositors are pleased to say for him, but what he has actually said himself; which is this:

"Ye know the kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he lived in poverty [72], that ye through his poverty might be rich."

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[72] The only shadow of argument which can be adduced from this text in favour of the pre-existence of Christ, is from the words *επτωχευσε πλουσιος ων*' in the public version, 'though he was rich he became poor.' But 1.) The verb *πτωχευω* does not properly signify 'to become poor,' but 'to be poor.'—Stephan. Thes. *πτωχευω*, 'mendicus sum,' 'mendicus vivo.' He translates

Observe here, that the apostle does not say that having been rich he became poor; that he passed from an antecedent state of opulence to a subsequent state of poverty; much less does he insinuate that the riches which our Lord

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the text 'q. vestri causâ mendicans vixit.'—Constantin. Lex. πτωχευω, 'inops dego,' 'mendico.' In the New Testament it only occurs in this place, in the LXX., six times. See Trommii Concord. in verb.

2.) The construction requires that the two states should be simultaneous. The aorist expresses a perfect action, in past definite time; which time is ascertained by the connexion. Christ επτωχευσε, 'was poor.' When?—πλουσιος ων, 'at the time that he was rich.' For this observation I am indebted to a learned and ingenious friend, who has distinguished himself by the accuracy of his remarks upon the English verb, and by some other learned publications. It is objected that πλουσιος ων may refer to past time, as τυφλος ων, John ix. 25, signifies 'having been blind.' But the adverb αρτι, 'now I see,' which immediately follows, shows that the participle which precedes is to be understood in a preterite sense. And had the apostle intended to express that the state of poverty was subsequent to that of affluence, he would probably have introduced the word ειτα, or υστερον, before the verb επτωχευσε.

The most accurate critics and commentators translate and expound the words as expressing simultaneous and not successive states. "Cum vi ita polleret omnis generis miracula patrandi, personam tamen gessit, tam humilem, ut ne domum quidem haberet propriam." Grotius in loc.—To the same purpose Slichtingius and Brennius. "Consider the kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, being rich, he was poor on account of you." Wakefield's Inquiry, p. 176.

possessed consisted in the dignity and felicity of a pre-existent state. The apostle affirms the existence of two contemporary events, that Christ was rich, and, at the same time, that he lived in poverty. That this is the proper primary meaning of the apostle's words, no person acquainted with the original can doubt. Whether the genius of the Greek language will even admit of the sense commonly annexed to the words, *viz.* of a transition from a state of affluence to a state of indigence, may justly be questioned. Hence it follows, that whatever the apostle meant by the word *rich*, it expresses a state which Jesus possessed not before he was born into the world, but while he was leading a life of poverty in it.

It is inquired in what sense Jesus was rich, if not in his divine nature and pre-existent glory?

To this question some have answered, that he was rich in good works, in virtue, piety, benevolence, and the divine favour. *q. d.* Though eminently virtuous, he was very poor [73].

[73] See the Theol. Repos. vol. iii. p. 438. Note by the late venerable William Turner, of Wakefield. See also Wakefield's Inquiry, ubi supra.

But this interpretation destroys the opposition between the two conditions which are ascribed to Jesus; nor would it so well suit the apostle's purpose in urging the example of Christ as a motive to charity and generosity.

The interpretation of Grotius and others, adopted by Mr. Lindsey, is more to the apostle's purpose. Jesus Christ was rich in miraculous powers, which it was at his option to employ for his own benefit. He fed the multitude: he brought miraculous draughts of fishes into the net; he paid tribute by miracle; and by miracle he supplied a wedding feast with wine. With equal ease he could have supplied himself and his friends with all the comforts, the conveniences, and the elegancies of life. He was rich—but he lived in poverty. He made no use of his miraculous powers for his own advantage. He subsisted upon the liberality of his followers, and had not where to lay his head [74].

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[74] "Christ's riches were his wisdom and great powers from God, by which he had all nature at his command, and could supply every want. And his meritorious poverty consisted in his never entertaining a single desire to employ his miraculous

From kindness, and for the sake of his followers, he submitted to these privations, to set them a memorable example of fortitude, of resignation, of self-denial, for the benefit of others.

'That they through his poverty might be *rich*.' Here the connexion requires that the word should be taken in a figurative sense: rich in faith, in holiness, in benevolence, and in the promises and blessings of the Gospel. How admirably calculated such an argument was to excite a spirit of compassion for the poor, of gratitude, of kindness and generosity, and of active persevering benevolence, it is unnecessary to remark. It speaks for itself.

XIV.

Ephes. iv. 9. "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?"

"That is," says archbishop Newcome, "he descended into the grave." Psalm lxiii. 9, "They that seek my soul to destroy it shall go into the lower parts of the earth."

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powers for his private ease or benefit, but choosing to lead a poor dependent life, because such an example was of most lasting benefit to us." Lindsey's Seq. p. 268.

This text, though some are disposed to understand it as a proof of the pre-existence and incarnation of Christ, is generally allowed even by learned Trinitarians and Arians themselves to be of little weight in the controversy.

XV.

Philipp ii. 5—9. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," &c.

This is a passage of considerable difficulty, upon which the greatest possible stress is laid by the advocates for the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus Christ, which therefore merits the closest and the most impartial attention. Each clause must be considered in detail; after which it will be more easy to sum up the evidence of the whole.

1. " Who being in the *form* of God[73]."

The word translated *form* properly signifies the *shape*, the *human figure*. Mark xvi. 12, " He appeared in another form to two of them as

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[73] *Being in the form of God*] εν μορφη Θεου υπαρχων. Μορφη, *i. e.* ειδος, ιδεα. Hesychius, Suidas.—" Forma generaliter de quavis re." Constantin. Lex.—" Forma, omne quod in oculos occurrit, imago." Schleusner.—" Μορφη speciem sonat, aut figuram." Erasmus; who, in his long and learned note upon this celebrated text, remarks, " Non video quid hic locus proprie faciat adversus Arianos, qui non negabant Dei Filium esse Deum. Proinde totus hic locus mihi videtur violentius detorqueri ad Christi naturam, cum Paulus agat de specie exhibitâ nobis."

By this liberal and fair concession, this elegant critic has incurred the high displeasure of those stern champions of the orthodox faith, Calvin and Beza; the former of whom loudly accuses Erasmus as a traitor to the cause, who, while he every where professes to believe the divinity of Christ, abandons in the detail what he maintains in the gross, and explains away every text by which that sublime doctrine is proved. " Mihi certe," adds the zealous reformer, " ne omnes quidem diaboli hunc locum extorqueant, quia in Deo firmissimum est argumentum, a gloriâ ad essentiam."

This argument from the form to the essence of divinity is much insisted upon by Trinitarian expositors. See Hammond, Vatablus, Castalio, Guyse, &c. Sir Richard Ellys, in his Fortuita Sacra, in a learned note upon this text, lays great stress (after Beza) upon the word υπαρχω, as appropriated to the divine nature of Christ, while γινομαι and λαμβανω are used in reference to his human nature. But, to support this criticism, it must be first proved that Christ had a divine nature. The word υπαρχω will not itself prove it. See Schleusner.

they walked into the country." See Joseph. Ant. l. 2. ix. 7; l. 6. xiv. 2.

All expositors agree that the word, in its present connexion, is to be understood figuratively. They differ widely in their interpretation of the figure.

1.) Calvin, Beza, and most of the trinitarian expositors explain it of the manifestation of the attributes of God in his works, from which may be inferred the divinity of his essence. By parity of reason, from the divine form and majesty of Christ they infer his divine nature.

But as Christ is said, ver. 7, to have assumed the *form* of a slave when he was not really a slave, so he might appear in the *form* of God, without being really and essentially God.

2.) Dr. Clarke (Scrip. Doct. No. 934,) represents the Logos as the person "by whom God created all things, by whom he governs all things, by whom he appeared to Adam, to the patriarchs, and to Moses, the angel that appeared in the bush. This," says he, "was being in the form of God." Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 15. With this learned writer agree Dr.

Whitby, Dr. Doddridge, and most of what are called the high Arian expositors[76].

Dr. Clarke thinks it necessary to caution his readers against "the very unnatural interpretation which not only the Socinian writers, but Grotius also and some others, put upon these words;" and Dr. Doddridge, with bishop Burnet, (on the Art. p. 46,) thinks "the Socinian interpretation very cold and insipid."

It must be so, if the Arian interpretation of this text is true. But it has not yet been proved that the soul which animated the body of Jesus was the maker and governor of the world, the Jehovah who appeared to Adam, to the patriarchs, to Moses in the bush, and to the Israelites upon mount Sinai. Nor can this stupendous and *not very natural* hypothesis be justly inferred from the figurative and indefinite expression, that Jesus was in the form of God[77].

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[76] In the outward appearance of God before his incarnation, as, after it, he was in the outward appearance of a slave: ver. 7. Newcome.

[77] Sir Richard Ellys, in the Note before referred to, asserts, that the Arian interpretation of 'the form of God,' as referring to the splendour of the appearance of the Logos to the patriarchs, is unsupported by the authority of the ancients.

3.) Grotius, and with him the old Socinians and the modern Unitarians, understand the expression 'being in the form of God,' of the miraculous powers with which our Lord was invested, and by which he controuled the laws of nature, healed the sick, raised the dead, and performed other godlike works[78].

This interpretation best agrees with the antithesis, ver. 7, "He assumed the form," *i. e.* the appearance, of a slave. Also the miracles of Christ might, with as much propriety, be figuratively described as the form of God, as an appearance to Moses in the bush. But we are sure that our Lord performed miracles, and we are not sure that he appeared to Moses and the patriarchs; but the contrary.

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[78] "Μορφη non significat internum et occultum aliquid, sed id quod in oculos occurrit, qualis erat eximia in Christo potestas sanandi morbos omnes, &c. quæ vere divina sunt." Grotius.—"Forma Dei quid est nisi exemplum, quòd Deus apparet dum mortuos excitat, surdis reddit auditum, leprosos mundat?" Ambrosius apud Erasmum.—"In formâ Dei erat cum divina opera et miracula solo jussu et nutu suo ederet," &c. Slichtingius.—To the same purpose Crellius and Brennius.—"Jesus Christ, en qualité d'homme, paroissoit, à certains égards, plus semblable à Dieu qu'aux hommes, comme en ce qu'il commandoit à toute la nature avec un empire absolu, et faisoit des miracles inouis. C'est ce que S. Paul appelle la forme, c'est à dire la ressemblance de Dieu." Le Clerc.

" The form of God," says Dr. Lardner, (Log. p. 12,) " seems to me to have been enjoyed by our Saviour in this world. It denotes his knowledge of the hearts of men, his power of working miracles at all times, whenever he pleased, and all the other evidences of his divine mission. This sense wonderfully accords with what our Lord saith, John x. 34. 36."

Mr. Lindsey (Seq. p. 272,) says, " The form of God which Christ wore upon earth, evidently consisted in those extraordinary endowments of a divine wisdom and power, which shone forth in him."

2. " Thought it not robbery, to be equal with God [79]."

It is universally agreed that the words ισα Θεῳ, here translated ' equal with God,' only express similarity, not proper and full equality, and ought to be rendered *as* God, or *like* God.

The phrase occurs frequently in the Old Testament. Job v. 17, " They grope in the noon-day as in the night." LXX. ισα νυκτι. Chap. x. 10, " Hast thou not curdled me (ισα

[79] " Ουχ ἁρπαγμον ἡγησατο το ειναι ισα Θεῳ, Non rapinam arbitratus est, esse se æqualem Deo." Vulgate.—" ισα, neutrum plurale more Græcorum, adverbialiter capitur." Slichtingius.

τυρῳ) like cheese?" Chap. xi. 12, "Man is born (ισα ονῳ) like a wild ass's colt." See also chap. xiii. 12; v. 20; xv. 16; xxiv. 20; xl. 15.[80] No person therefore, who is not grossly ignorant, would from this text infer the perfect equality of Christ with God.

The words "he thought it not robbery," are attended with considerable difficulty.

The Greek word ἁρπαγμος, here translated *robbery*, scarcely occurs in any other Greek writer[81]. It is a verbal noun. But it is not agreed among the learned, whether it is to be taken in an active or a passive sense; whether

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[80] See Whitby in loc., who, while he establishes this sense of ισα, contends, justly enough, that it gives no advantage to the Socinians. Classical authorities for this adverbial use of ισα are to be found in Newcome and in Schleusner. When the Jews charge our Lord with arrogating to himself equality with God, the expression is ισον ἑαυτον ποιων τῳ Θεῳ. John v. 18. Indeed Mr. Cappe (Crit. Rem. vol. i. p. 233,) quotes this very text to prove that ισος signifies nothing more than general similarity. By the expression 'God was his Father,' he would at the utmost only assert that, in a manner, he was like God.

[81] The word is found in Plutarch. de Liberor. Educ. but in a connexion which throws but little light on the subject. Harwood's Lib. Trans. Archbishop Newcome's Note, and Wetstein in loc. It seems, however, rather favourable to the supposition that the word is used in an active sense; in which sense it is understood by Calvin, Beza, Hammond, Doddridge, and Guyse.

it signifies the act of seizure, or the prey, the booty, the thing seized upon.

Many critics, amongst whom are the translators of the public version, take the word in the active sense: they render it 'robbery[82].' And in this sense of the word this clause is to be understood in apposition with the preceding, and as expressing an additional circumstance of the dignity of Christ antecedent to his humiliation. *q. d.* He was in the form of God; and being so, he thought it no robbery, no unjust assumption, to be and to appear like God.

The majority of expositors, for very probable reasons stated below[83], interpret the

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[82] "Ἁρπαγμος proprie ipsa rapiendi actio, quæ usitatius ἁρπαγη dicitur: ἁρπαγμα verò id quod raptum est, sed confundi scias Isa. iii. 14." Drusius.—In the controversy concerning the person of Christ, it is of no consequence whether the word be taken in an active or a passive sense. Mr. Cappe seems to prefer the active signification: "For," he says, "I do not think the words much mistranslated in our version. He has not thought it robbery, either an injury, or an act of usurpation." But the learned writer does not express himself with his usual precision: for he had just before stated it as his opinion that the word ἁρπαγμος "is of the very same import with ἁρπαγμα, the thing seized upon, the *subject* of unjust usurpation." Cappe's Crit. Rem. vol. i. p. 232.

[83] The reasons for taking the word in a passive sense are the following:

word in a passive sense, ἁρπαγμος for ἁρπαγμα, 'a prey,' 'a booty,' 'a thing obtained by force, and retained with eagerness.'

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1. 'Αρπαγμος being derived from the perfect passive, retains a passive signification. Mr. Wakefield shows from Eustathius, that, according to the genius of the Greek language, ἁρπαγμος is equivalent to ἁρπαγμα. "'Αρπαζειν vero est aliquid avide et violenter arripere, ut tibi vendices, et tuum facias." Sylva Crit. vol. iii. p. 112.—"'Αρπαγμος proprie, direptio. Nomina in μος desinentia fere *actionem*, non *rem* significant. Sed interdum tamen *passive* usurpatur, ut significat vel rem raptam, vel rem avide diripiendam, et vindicandam." Schleusner.—See Wetstein, and Wakefield's Inq. p. 186.

2. The construction of the sentence requires that this clause should express the humiliation of Christ, and consequently that ἁρπ. should be taken in a passive sense. It would be trifling to say, that, being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be in the form or likeness of God. Le Clerc, in his notes upon Hammond, remarks, "that to justify the common translation, the Greek ought to have been και ουχ ηγεμενος ἁρπαγμον ειναι ισα Θεῳ, ὁμως κ. τ. λ." See also Dr. Clarke, Scrip. Doct. No. 934.

3. The early writers, who used the Greek language, and to whom the phrase must have been familiar, understood the words in this sense.

In the Letter from the Churches of Vienne and Lyons to those of Asia and Phrygia, they say of the martyrs, "They were such zealous followers of the example of Christ, who, being in the form of God, did not eagerly retain that likeness to God," ('did not covet to be honoured as God,' Dr. Clarke,) "that though they had often been cast to wild beasts, and had endured all manner of torments, yet they would by no means suffer themselves to be honoured with the title of martyrs." Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5.

In this sense the second clause of the sentence is in opposition to the first. It is the first step in his voluntary humiliation.

'Who, being in the form of God, did not esteem as a prey' (and therefore did not eagerly grasp, did not claim as his inherent right, did not refuse to relinquish,) 'this likeness to God.'

The latter clause is plainly exegetical of the former; *this* likeness to God is the very same thing as being in the form of God. See Wakefield's Inquiry, p. 185.

This interpretation has the sanction of many eminent expositors [84].

Origen, in his Commentary upon John, says, "The goodness of Christ appeared greater and more divine, and truly after the image of the Father, when he humbled himself, &c. (η ει ἁρπηγησατο) than if he had eagerly grasped or tenaciously retained his likeness to God." Huet. p. 34.

Novatian says, "Christ, though he knew that he was in the form of God, did not eagerly grasp (or tenaciously retain) equality with God. For though he knew that he was God, he never compared himself with God his Father;" &c. De Trin. c. 17. See Clarke, ibid.

[84] "Æqualitatem quam cum Patre habebat ambitiose retinere noluit, velut facere solent prædones, qui quod semel rapuerunt summa cura et studio retinent." Vatablus.—"Pro rapina ducere, dicit pro rapaciter uti, et retinere, ut Latini dicunt, in hostium numero habere, pro occidere ut hostem. Sic enim poni solet verbum ἡγεισθαι, ut non solum cogitationis sit, verum etiam

Dr. Clarke, No. 934, "He did not covet to be honoured as God: was not greedy or fond of, or unwilling to let go the prize: so the words more strictly signify."

Mr. Lindsey: (Seq. p. 272, &c.) "Being in the form of God, he did not look upon it as a prize to be hastily catched at to be like God, did not eagerly covet to be honoured for his godlike powers, was not ambitious of displaying them."

The proper simple meaning of the phrase appears to be, not to covet, to be fond of, or to affect to display, but to *hold fast*, as a person does what he has seized by force, claims as his right, and is resolved not to relinquish. In this sense it stands in opposition to εκενωσε, 'he exhausted himself,' he parted with all, without retaining any thing.

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rei." Conf. v. 25. Castalio.—"If ἁρπαγμα be synonymous to ἁρπαγμος, as βαπτισμα to βαπτισμος, φωτισμα to φωτισμος, &c. the proper meaning seems to be a prey, or booty, and may be either just or unjust. They therefore hardly give the exact signification who explain it by a thing very desirable, or to be *coveted*. Nothing is properly a prey or booty till in possession. The apostle therefore may be supposed to say, 'who was not eager or tenacious in retaining this likeness,'" &c. Peirce.—"Omnium bona prædam tuam duceres." Cicero in Verrem, v. 15.

3. " But made himself of no reputation [85]."

Literally, 'he emptied himself.' This phrase is opposed to the preceding. So far from tenaciously grasping, and refusing to relinquish, he voluntarily, and of his own accord, divested himself of every thing that is intended by the form or likeness of God. If the immutable attributes of Deity are intended, these were concealed—or the pre-existent glories of the Logos, these were quiescent—or his extraordinary miraculous powers, these were voluntarily suspended, while he suffered himself to appear and to be treated as though he possessed them not. See 2 Cor. viii. 9.

4. " He took upon him the form of a servant:"

Or, " Assuming the form of a slave [86]." In the form of God he really existed (ὑπαρχων)—the form of a servant he voluntarily assumed (λαβων). Invested with a high and honourable commission from God, he submitted to a life of labour and dependence. Mark x. 45, " The

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[85] Αλλ' ἑαυτον εκενωσε. " Exinanivit semetipsum." Vulg.—" Cessavit a miraculis et operibus illis divinis." Slichtingius.

[86] μορφην δουλου λαβων. Here the sentence closes. Wakefield.

Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Luke xxii. 27, "I am in the midst of you as one that serveth."

5. "And was made in the likeness of men[87]."

Or, "Being in the likeness of men."

Trinitarians and Arians argue from this text, that, antecedently to his divesting himself of the form of God, he was not in the likeness of men, but a being of superior or supreme rank, either a Logos or a God, who voluntarily laid aside his glory, and became incarnate.

Unitarians understand this language solely of

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[87] εν ὁμοιωματι ανθρωπων γενομενος· "being made like *other* men." Wakefield,—"Cum similis esset hominibus, illis nempe primis, *i. e.* peccati expers." Grotius.—"Nothing," says Dr. Clarke, ibid. "can be more unnatural than the comment of Grotius upon these words, who understands them to signify that Christ was like Adam in a state of innocence. Whereas the plain meaning of the apostle is, that Christ, being in the form of God, humbled himself by condescending to take upon him the form of a man." How natural does every one's own hypothesis appear to himself! Grotius is, I think, mistaken in his comment. But surely it involves no extravagance equal to that of supposing that it was an act of condescension in Christ to be a man, which Dr. Clarke calls the plain meaning of the text. Mr. Peirce (in loc,) thinks that Christ is said to be in the *likeness* of men, because he was not really a man, but a human body inhabited by the Logos. It is more reasonable to explain this phrase of our Lord's declining to exert his supernatural powers, and so appearing like an ordinary man.

a voluntary suspension of his miraculous powers. Though, possessing them, he made no display of them for his own personal benefit, but appeared in all respects like a man who was favoured with no such extraordinary distinction.

This interpretation is fully justified by parallel passages in the Old and New Testament.

Sampson was endued with supernatural strength. He said to Delilah, "If they bind me, then shall I be weak, and shall be (ὡς εἷς των ανθρωπων) as one of the men:" in the public version, very properly, "as *another* man." Judges xvi. 7. 11. 13. 17. See also Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7, "I said, Ye are Gods, but ye shall die like men," (ὡς ανθρωποι) like *other* men. Gal. i. 1, "Paul an apostle, not from men, nor through man;" *i. e.* not from or by ordinary men.

6. "And being found in fashion as a man[88]:"

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[88] και σχηματι ευρεθεις ὡς ανθρωπος.] "Σχημα. *generatim*, omnem habitum et statum alicujus rei externum significat: *speciatim* vero dicitur de habitu, cultu, gestu, formâ ac conditione externâ corporis humani." Schleusner.—Mr. Peirce considers this clause as exactly parallel to the preceding; ευρεθεις answering to γενομενος, and σχηματι to ὁμοιωματι. Peirce in loc.

Or, " Being in fashion as a man."

The word εὑρισκω, ' to find,' often expresses nothing more than simple existence. 1 Cor. xv. 15, " We are found (*i. e.* we are) false witnesses of God." See also Est. i. 5. Isa. liii. 9. 1 Cor. iv. 2. Matt. i. 18.

The word σχημα, translated ' fashion,' signifies the whole external appearance of any thing, and particularly of a human being. The sense therefore seems to be nearly the same as in the preceding clause; *viz.* being in external appearance a man, *i. e.* like other men.

7. " He humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God on his part has very highly exalted him[89]," — " exalted him higher than before;" *viz.* before his humiliation and sufferings.

Upon the whole, the following appears to be the most correct version, and the true sense of this celebrated passage:

" Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus:"

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[89] *Has very highly exalted him.*] ὑπερυψωσε, " God has advanced him higher than before:" *i. e.* before his incarnation. Peirce.—Rather, ' before his sufferings, when he appeared as a prophet working miracles, or in the form of God.'

"Who, being in the form of God," *i. e.* a prophet invested with miraculous powers,

"Was not eagerly tenacious in retaining this likeness to God:"

Did not regard these powers as a property acquired by his own exertions, to which he had an independent indefeasible right, which he would exercise at pleasure, and upon no consideration relinquish, but as a trust, to be exercised only for the benefit of others, and to be suspended or resigned at the divine command, or when the purpose of his mission required.

"But divested himself of it, assuming the form of a slave."

When the purposes of his mission required it, he conducted himself as though he were totally destitute of all supernatural gifts. And far from usurping the authority of a king, as some of his ill-advised followers urgently recommended, so humble was his station, so assiduous his labours, and so dependent his condition, that he appeared, and chose to appear, in the rank of a menial servant.

"Becoming *thus* like *other* men," *i. e.* as one who possessed no extraordinary powers:

"And being in outward appearance as an

ordinary man, he humbled himself;" *i. e.* still further, " becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God on his part has exalted him higher than he was before."

For whereas, antecedently to his sufferings, he was, though in a very dignified character, no more than a prophet working miracles in the name of God, he is now advanced, since his resurrection, and as the reward of his obedience and self-denial, to a much happier and more exalted state. Be you therefore like him obedient, self-denying, actively and perseveringly benevolent; and upon all occasions prompt to sacrifice your own ease and gratification to the good of others, to a sense of duty, and to promote the great purposes of rational existence.

According to this interpretation, the exaltation of Christ consists in his possession of a divine commission and voluntary miraculous powers. His humiliation consists in neglecting to use those powers for his own benefit, in submitting to a humble, laborious, and dependent condition, and finally, in resigning himself to suffering and death in obedience to the will of God, and for the good of mankind.

Thus this celebrated text, admitting of a fair interpretation consistently with the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, if not decisive in favour of this doctrine, may at least be regarded as neutral. It is one of those passages of which no use can be made in deciding the controversy.

XVI.

Col. i. 15. " Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:" or, " of the whole creation [90]."

Upon this text very great stress is laid for the purpose of illustrating the mode of the derivation of the Son from the Father.

1. The Trinitarians understand the words as expressive of the eternal *necessary* generation of the Son of God.

This is the interpretation of Calvin, Beza, and others, who evade the inference of the Arians, that the Son must be a creature, by insisting that in this case the expression would have been ' first-created,' not ' first-begotten' [91].

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[90] πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως.

[91] " Non ideo tantum primogenitus, quod tempore præcesserit omnes creaturas, sed quia in hoc a Patre sit genitus, ut per ipsum conderentur." Calvin.—" Facilis est responsio ad Ariano-

2. Dr. Clarke insists strongly upon this text to establish his doctrine, " that the Son is the eternal and *voluntary*, but not *created* production of the Father's power."

" It is observable," says this learned writer (Scr. Doct. No. 937,) " that St. Paul here does not call our Saviour πρωτοκτιστος, ' first-created ;' but πρωτοτοκος, ' first-born :' signifying in general that he was before the creation of all things brought forth, produced by, derived from, the Father; but not declaring in what particular manner. Col. i. 17.—What the figurative word τεχθεις, ' generated ' or ' begotten,' properly and literally implies, this the Scripture has no where revealed or explained." He produces many passages from ancient writers to show that in this sentiment they coincided with him.

3. The Arians understand the text as expressing the creation of the Logos by the Father before all worlds.

" It obviously denotes," says Dr. Harwood, (Soc. Sch. p. 35,) " that the Son of God is the very first being whom the power and goodness

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rum cavillum—nam hâc ratione dicendus fuisset πρωτος κτισθεις. At cum dicitur πρωτοτοκος, manifeste distinguitur quod genitum est ab eo quod est conditum." Beza.

of the Supreme produced into existence." To the same purpose is Mr. Peirce's note upon the text.

4. Grotius, and with him the Socinian and most of the Unitarian expositors, interpret the text as referring to the new creation. Eph. ii. 10; iv. 24, The word *first-born* is used to express excellence in its kind. Ps. lxxxix. 27. Jer. xxxi. 9. Job xviii. 13.[92] And of the new creation Christ is the head and chief, being the chief instrument of God in the renovation of the moral world.

5. The word πρωτοτοκος, 'first-born,' occurs again, ver. 18, "who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead:" where it plainly signifies that Christ was the first person who was raised from the dead to an immortal life. There can be little doubt that this is the true

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[92] "πρωτοτοκος, primus in creatione nova, de qua 2 Cor. v. 17. Apoc. xxi. 5." Grotius.—"Per creaturam non intelligitur creatura vetus sed nova. Hujus creaturæ Christus est primogenitus, id est, omnium primus a Deo creatus." Crellius.—"πρωτοτοκον Hebræis dicitur quod primum et quod summum est in quoque genere. Ps. lxxxix. 26---28." Brennius.—The first-born, *i. e.* the chief, the lord of all mankind: ver. 23: Mark xvi. 15, "of the new creation; of Jews and Gentiles, now blended into one mass." Lindsey's Seq. p. 478. Dr. Priestley's Ear. Op. vol. iii. p. 496. Haynes on Attrib. p. 197.

meaning of the word in the 15th verse. It is so, probably, in the few remaining passages in which this epithet is applied to Christ in the writings of Paul. Rom. viii. 29. Heb. i. 6. And certainly Revel. i. 5: "The first-born from the dead;" the very phrase which is used Col. i. 18.

XVII.

Col. i. 17. "He is before all things[93]:"

i. e. in time, dignity, and excellence, in the natural creation, if that be the subject of the apostle's discourse; or, of the new creation, if that be the subject treated of, as Unitarians maintain. This question will be discussed hereafter. Mr. Lindsey explains the phrase of "priority in the destination and purpose of Almighty God," Seq. p. 482. Grotius, Brennius, and the old Socinians understand it of the high rank and dignity to which he is now advanced, and the authority which is given him over all creatures, as they apprehend.

No argument for the pre-existence of Christ can be drawn from this ambiguous text.

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[93] και αυτος εστι προ παντων.] "προ is an adverb of time and place, and sometimes, figuratively, of excellence. James v. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 8." Schleusner.

XVIII.

Rev. iii. 14. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning," or head, "of the creation of God."

The natural creation, according to Arians and Trinitarians—the new moral creation, as Unitarians believe. And that it will bear this interpretation is acknowledged by learned Trinitarians themselves. Beza and Hammond both explain the words in this sense[94].

Mr. Lindsey justly observes, that "our Lord having characterized himself, first, as the truth, or teacher of truth; next, as the faithful martyr to the truth; it is much more consistent with these characters to proceed to represent himself as the head of the new creation, the leader and chief of the whole army of martyrs, than as the being who created all things." Comm. and Essays, vol. i. p. 449.

The old Socinians understood the words of the universal dominion to which Christ was, as

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[94] "ἀρχὴ, a quo principium ducunt omnes res conditæ: vel potius novi seculi, *i. e.* ecclesiæ, caput verum, et unicum principium." Beza.—"Qui primus pater et auctor est ecclesiæ christianæ." Hammond.—"Novæ creationis." Grotius.

they thought, advanced after his ascension into heaven [95].

These are all the passages which the author, many years ago, after a careful perusal of the New Testament, could discover and select as what then appeared to him clear and unequivocal assertions of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ; as to the generality of Christians they still appear. He has stated those criticisms and interpretations of them which he now thinks to be just, and by which he was gradually, and not without much reluctance, induced to abandon his former conclusions as erroneous and unscriptural. He does not expect that these interpretations will afford the same satisfaction to all his readers, even to those who are most candid and ingenuous, who are sincere inquirers after truth, and who value it above all price. It was long before he himself attained the satisfaction which he now feels. But truth, aided by time, will gradually make its way. And in the mean while, it is surely not too much to expect, that it will be allowed that these texts, which at the first glance appear so

[95] "Princeps omnium creaturarum Dei." Brennius.

decisively to assert the pre-existence of Christ, nevertheless admit of an interpretation, founded upon the principles of just criticism, perfectly consistent with his proper and simple humanity.

Upon these texts, which lie at the very foundation of the Arian and Trinitarian doctrines, it has been thought expedient to insist at large. These being thus copiously discussed, the remaining articles may be dispatched with greater brevity.

SECTION IV.

A COLLECTION OF TEXTS, WHICH, IF THEY DO NOT DIRECTLY ASSERT THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST, HAVE NEVERTHELESS BEEN THOUGHT TO ALLUDE TO IT, AND TO BE MOST EASILY EXPLAINED UPON THAT HYPOTHESIS.

In the preceding Section it has been shown that the phrases 'to be with God,' and 'to ascend into heaven,' mean, to be made acquainted with the divine purposes and will: and that the correlate phrases 'to be sent by God,' 'to come from God,' 'to descend from heaven,' and the like, express a divine commission to reveal the purposes and will of God to mankind.

Also, that the phrase, 'being in the form and likeness of God,' signifies being invested with miraculous powers; and the correspondent phrases, 'being in the likeness of a man,' or 'the form of a servant,' when put in opposition

to 'the form of God,' signify appearing in a humble condition, like an ordinary man, who possessed no such miraculous powers.

It has also been proved that, in the language of Scripture, persons, or things, or states of things, are spoken of as actually existing, when they exist only in the divine purpose and decree.

These principles being premised, there will be little difficulty in the explanation of those texts which, though they cannot be regarded as asserting, are nevertheless understood by many as alluding to, the pre-existence of Christ.

1. John vi. 46. "Not that any one hath seen the Father, save he who is of God, he hath seen the Father."

i. e. No one is acquainted with the Father's will, but he who hath received a commission from him.

2. John viii. 14. "I know whence I came and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go."

i. e. I know from whom I received my authority, and to whom I am accountable; but you are wilfully ignorant of both.

3. John viii. 23. "Ye are from beneath;

I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

i. e. You are of a mean and worldly disposition; I am, *i. e.* my doctrine is, from heaven; and its tendency is to purify and exalt the mind. John xv. 19. Col. iii. 2.

4. John viii. 38. "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which you have seen with your Father." Ver. 44, "Ye are of your Father the devil."

i. e. I teach you what I have learned from God: ye do what you have learned from the devil. The expression in both clauses is figurative.

5. John xiv. 28. "My Father is greater than I."

This is a very perplexing text to those who believe in the proper deity of Christ. Some say, the Father is greater than the Son in his divine nature, the Son being an emanation from him[1];—others, that he is greater than the

[1] Of this mind are the Athanasians ancient and modern; Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius, Novatian, Gregory Nazianzen, Bull, Waterland, Whitby. "Quod autem Hilarius dicit, 'Patrem esse majorem Filio, Filium tamen non esse minorem,' intelligendum est Patrem esse principium Filii, qui naturâ tamen est æqualis Patri. In divinis personis, ordo est: inæqualitas non

Son in his human nature[2];—and some, in his official capacity as mediator. This latter is the interpretation of Hammond, Doddridge, and Guyse.

The Arians claim this text as decisive in their favour. "The sense," says Dr. Clarke in his usual manner, "in which the Socinian writers understand these words is very low and mean. The plain meaning is, that God the Father is greater than the Son." Scr. Doct. No. 830.

But this learned writer appears not to have recollected that his own Logos was as much inferior to the infinite self-existent Deity, as the meanest worm. Nor would Dr. Clarke say, whatever our Lord might mean, that his dis-

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est: quemadmodum distinctio est, diversitas nulla est." Erasmus.—"The primitive fathers owned that the Father was greater than the Son as to his original, the Son being begotten by him; and yet declared that he was God, and equal to God, as to his essence." Whitby.

[2] Beza is very angry with the Arians for not being satisfied with one or other of these solutions, either of which ought to have silenced them, "si sanabiles fuissent aut etiamnum essent." Neither of them, however, in Beza's judgement, expresses our Lord's true meaning, *viz.* "that his future state of exaltation would be greatly superior to his present state of humiliation." But the pious reformer seems to have thought that any arguments were good enough for the Arians. And they might have guessed a good while before they had discovered what he tells them is the truth.

ciples understood him in this sublime sense: it is plain that they must have regarded him as a human being, otherwise their minds would have been overwhelmed with astonishment and terror. But surely our Lord must have used his words in that sense in which he knew that his hearers would understand them, *viz.*

That God was infinitely more wise and powerful and good than he; and therefore able to reward him, and to protect them when he was withdrawn from them[3]. This is the interpretation of the Unitarians. Nor is this phraseology, which Dr. Clarke thinks so "flat and insipid," without example in Scripture. Job xxxiii. 12, 13, "God is greater than man: why then dost thou strive against him?" John x. 29, "My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all."

6. John xviii. 37. "To this end was I born, and for this came I into the world:"

"From another and much better abode," says Dr. Doddridge.

But how will this interpretation apply to John xvii. 18, "As thou hast sent me into the

[3] "Πατηρ μα μειζων, mittens misso. Hoc autem ideo dicitur ut intelligatur, et se ibi tutum fore, et ipsis in Patre plus futurum præsidii, quam in sua corporali præsentia." Grotius.

world, even so have I also sent them into the world." 'To be sent into the world' is to be invested with a divine commission: 'to come into the world' is to appear in public under a prophetic character. Chap. iii. 17. 19; ix. 39; xi. 27.

7. Rom. x. 6. "The righteousness (or justification) which is by faith speaketh thus: Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above.)"

q. d. The language of faith in the Gospel is not, Who shall teach us divine truths? as though Christ had not revealed all that was needful, and it would be necessary for him to visit this world again. See John iii. 13.[4]

8. 1 Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ[5], as some of them" (the Israelites in the wilderness) "also tempted him, and were destroyed by serpents."

For 'Christ,' the Vatican and Ephrem manuscripts, and the Syriac and Coptic versions,

[4] "Solent qui rem perquam difficilem volunt significare, uti similitudine ascensus in cœlum, &c. Intellige, nihil opus de eo nos laboremus." Grotius.

[5] *Christ*] Χριστον. Irenæus certainly read Κυριον, Lord. See Wetstein in loc.

read Κυριον, 'Lord,' and the Alex. MS. Θεον, 'God.' Epiphanius charges Marcion the heretic with substituting Χριστον, 'Christ.'

If we retain the received text, archbishop Newcome says, "the sense is, Nor let us tempt, try, prove, provoke Christ now, as some of them did God at that time." See the Improved Version in loc.

9. 1 Cor. x. 4. "They drank of the spiritual rock which followed them: and that rock was Christ."

i. e. A type or similitude of Christ, from whom flow all the refreshing blessings of the Gospel.

10. Gal. i. 1. "Paul an apostle, not of man nor by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead."

q. d. "Not of, nor by, ordinary men," see Phil. ii. 7: but by Jesus Christ, the sole head and governor of the church, from whom alone an apostolic mission could be derived.

11. Heb. ii. 14. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same[6]."

[6] *Took part of the same.*] "μετεσχε *i. e.* εκοινωνησε. μεταλαβεν." Cyrill. Phavorinus. See Schleusner. The word, therefore,

The expression ' took part' seems to indicate a voluntary assumption of human nature, and so it is translated by Dr. Harwood, and expounded by Dr. Doddridge. It ought to have been rendered ' he *participated* of the same.' And it no more implies that to become a man was a voluntary act in Christ, than the other expression, translated ' are partakers,' implies that it is a voluntary act in other human beings. " The word παραπλησιως," says Mr. Peirce, " does not here import a faint likeness or resemblance, but a proper and exact conformity. For he as properly partook of flesh and blood as any of the children do." The sense therefore is, that Christ was in every respect really and truly a man, as much so as any of the children of God whom he came to save. And this certainly is the scope of the writer's argument, as will be evident to every unprejudiced person who reads the paragraph with attention.

12. Heb. vii. 3. " For this Melchisedec —without father, without mother, without descent (or pedigree), having neither begin-

which our translators render *took part,* is equivalent to that which they translate *are partakers;* and by no means necessarily implies a voluntary act.

ning of days, nor end of life, and made like to the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

The writer of this epistle having found in Psalm cx. the priesthood of the Messiah compared with that of Melchisedec, strains the similitude to as many points of resemblance as possible.

As Melchisedec was a priest, without any mention having been made in the Old Testament of his pedigree, either by the father's or the mother's side; so Christ, being of the tribe of Judah, ver. 14, is also a priest, without priestly pedigree.

And as the history contains no account either of the birth or the death of Melchisedec, but only exhibits him as a living man; so Christ, since his ascension, is become a living priest, and is no more subject to change or death [7].

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[7] "Hæc non sunt nimium nunc urgenda cum obsoleverit prorsus ea ratio sic explicandæ Scripturæ." Le Clerc in Hammond, with his usual good sense.—If this be the true interpretation, which to me seems unquestionable, it puts an end to all the curious speculations concerning the person of Melchisedec: some supposing that he was the Logos, some, an angel, and some, Shem the son of Noah; and likewise, concerning the person of Christ, as being in his divine nature without mother, and in his human nature without father, and the like, with which divines have puzzled themselves to little purpose. See Peirce, and Improved Version, note.

13. Heb. xi. 26. "He (Moses) esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

"Such reproach as Christ endured." Newcome.—"Οἷος ὁ Χριστος επαθε." Photius.—So Lindsey: and others. See chap. xiii. 13.—"Typical of the sufferings of Christ." Grotius.—"Which the Israelites suffered as expectants of the Messiah." Beza and Hallet.—"The reproach which he incurred by the worship of the visible Jehovah, whom Paul considers in his future character of the Christ." H. Taylor in Ben Mordecai's Lett. p. 297.

The best interpretation of this text is that of Dr. Whitby, Dr. Sykes, Le Clerc, and others. The word *Christ* signifies 'anointed,' *i. e.* separated, consecrated. Hence it is applied to the Israelite nation, Ps. cv. 15; "Touch not my anointed" (LXX. 'my christs,' των χριστων) *i. e.* my chosen and consecrated people. Habak. iii. 13, "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for thine anointed," του χριστου σε, 'thy christ,' 'thy chosen people.'

'Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ,' that is, of the chosen and holy people of God, 'greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,' *q. d.* He preferred the state of a despised

Israelite to the opulence and grandeur of an Egyptian prince.

Dr. Clarke, with great judgement, takes no notice of this text.

14. Heb. xii. 25, 26. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him who speaketh from heaven," &c. See Haggai ii. 6.[8]

The speaker here alluded to is God himself, who, at the giving out of the Law, spake from mount Sinai, but who now by his spirit speaks from heaven. 1 Pet. i. 12. "The stress of the argument," says Peirce, "lies in the different manner of his speaking, his speaking on earth and his speaking from heaven." See also Grotius and Whitby.

15. Heb. xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

"In the tenor of his declarations, as well as in the glories of his divine nature." Dr. Doddridge.

[8] Archbishop Newcome strangely conceives of this passage as "favouring the supposition that our Lord was the angel of the covenant who presided at giving the Law." Dr. Clarke takes no notice of this text.

" The meaning of this place, as appears from the context, is, that the doctrine of Christ once taught by the apostles ought to be preserved unchanged." Dr. Clarke, No. 662: and with him agree Calvin[9], Whitby, Le Clerc, Newcome, and the majority of expositors. This interpretation is confirmed by ver. 9: " Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrine." The word *Christ* often stands for the doctrine of Christ. Eph. iv. 20, " We have not so learned Christ," *i. e.* his doctrine. See also Phil. iv. 13. Acts v. 42. 2 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 24.

16. 1 Pet. i. 11. " Searching what—the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

' The spirit of Christ' is that prophetic spirit which revealed the advent and the sufferings of Christ, as, John xiv. 17, ' the spirit of truth' is that inspiration from God which would reveal and attest the doctrine of the Gospel. See

[9] " Apparet non de æterna Christi essentia apostolum disputare, sed de ejus notitiâ, quæ omnibus seculis viguit inter pios, ac perpetuum ecclesiæ fundamentum fuit." Calvin.

Grotius in loc.; Clarke, No. 1209; and Lindsey's Seq. p. 283.

17. 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. "By which also he (Christ) went and preached unto the spirits in prison. Who some time were disobedient, when (once) the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing."

More correctly; "By which also, after he was gone, he preached to the spirits, *i. e.* persons[10] in prison: who formerly disbelieved."

q. d. By which spirit, communicated to his apostles after his ascension, (πορευθεις, see ver. 22, where the very same word is used in the same sense,) he proclaimed the Gospel to persons who were imprisoned in ignorance, idolatry, and vice, of the same description with those to whom Noah preached while the ark was building. Who indeed then preached with little effect, &c.

Those to whom Christ preaches by his spirit since his ascension are not the self-same persons to whom Noah preached, but persons of

[10] *Spirit* is not unfrequently used for *person*. See 1 Tim. vi. 21, compared with 2 Tim. iv. 22. Philem. v. 25. 1 John iv. 2, 3.

the same cast and character, the same race of idolaters and unbelievers, bound in the same chains of ignorance, vice, and prejudice.

This is the interpretation of Grotius[11], and seems to be the best solution of this obscure and entangled text.

Of the advocates for the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, some suppose with Dr. Whitby, Dr. Doddridge, &c., that Christ by his prophetic spirit, in the days of Noah, warned the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, who then rejected his admonitions, and are now suffering in prison, *i. e.* in hell.

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[11] " εν ῳ, per quem Dei spiritum missum in apostolos. πορευθεις. postquam in cœlum ascendit: vid. ver. 22. Joh. xiv. 2, 3. εν φυλακη, *i. e.* in carne. απειθησασι ποτε. κ. τ. λ. loquitur quasi iidem fuissent, et fuerant iidem non αριθμῳ, sed genere. Homines a Deo planè abalienati. Noæ non crediderunt: Christo crediderunt." Grotius.

Christ was raised to life by the spirit, that is, the power of God: by which spirit, after he was gone to heaven, he preached by the ministry of his apostles to the spirits in prison, not to the dead, but to the Gentile world who were without any sense or knowledge of God. Chap. iv. 6, " The Gospel was preached to them that were dead." Isa. xlii. 6, 7, " I give thee for a light to the Gentiles, to bring out the prisoners from the prison. Who were some time disobedient in the days of Noah."—" He preached not to the same individual persons; but to men like them, in the same circumstances." Lindsey's Seq. p. 283—288. Dr. Clarke makes no use of this text. See Imp. Ver. not. in loc.

Others, with Gregory Nazianzen, understand this text as teaching that Christ descended into hell to preach the Gospel to the imprisoned souls of those who perished in Noah's flood.

18. 1 John i. 1, 2. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

This text is parallel to John i. 1—14; and they are mutually explanatory of each other. Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of the Christian faith, who is there called 'the Word,' is here entitled 'the Word of Life,'—he is *there* said to have been "in the beginning;" *here*, he is "that which was from the beginning," *i. e.* from the commencement of the new dispensation.—In the Gospel it is said, "in him was Life;" in the Epistle he is styled "the Life," "the Eternal Life;" for this was the main object of his mission, the great doctrine which he was authorized to reveal.—In the Gospel, "the Word was with God;" in the Epistle, "this Eter-

nal Life was with the Father," *i. e.* he was instructed by God, and received his commission from him.—In the Gospel, " the Life was the Light of men, and John was sent to bear witness to it;" in the Epistle, " the Life was manifested, and his disciples saw it and bare witness."—Finally, in the Gospel, " the Word was flesh ;" the teacher of life was a real man: in the Epistle, this Word of life was also a real person, the object of sense; he was heard, and seen, and felt. He was not, as the Docetæ then taught, a spiritual being in the shape of a man, but without the essential properties of humanity, intangible, and impassible [12].

19. 1 John iv. 2. " Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." See ver. 3, and 2 John, ver. 7.

Calvin and bishop Horsley argue from this phrase the pre-existence and divinity of Christ. Grotius and the old Socinians interpret the words ' coming in the flesh,' of the humble and suffering state in which Christ appeared. Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey explain the phrase as expressive of the real and proper

[12] See Sect. III. No. 1. Also Impr. Version in loc.

humanity of Christ, in opposition to the doctrine of the Docetæ, which was then growing into fashion, that Christ was a man in appearance only. Of this doctrine the apostle expresses the strongest disapprobation, ver. 3, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist"—"which the world heareth." Ver. 5.

Thus it appears that the doctrine against which the apostle expresses a marked indignation, and which he denounces as the very essence and spirit of antichrist, is that which denies Christ to be a real man, and which maintains that he was a being different from what he appeared to be. This was the doctrine which the world received with applause; and the reason is plain: because it diminished the odium which was attached to the Christian religion, from the low extraction, the mean condition, and the ignominious execution of its original founder [13].

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[13] Lindsey's Sequel, p. 288—291.—"Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is truly man is of God, in opposition to the Docetæ, who maintained that he was man only in appearance." Dr. Priestley's History of Corrupt. vol. i. p. 8.—"'Coming in the flesh' is a very awkward and unnatural phrase,"

20. Rev. xxii. 16. "I am the root and the offspring of David." Comp. chap. v. 5.

q. d. I am a sucker or plant from the root of David. That root, of which it was foretold that it should grow out of the house of David. Isa. xi. 1, "There shall come forth a root from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Ver. 10, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse." Isa. liii. 2. Hos. xiv. 6. Rom. xv. 12. See Grotius in loc.

From the review which has been taken of the texts contained in this Section, we may conclude, that, though if the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ had been an undoubted fact, established upon independent evidence, some of these passages might be understood as containing an allusion to it, yet that no one of them can be admitted as a direct proof of the popular doctrine. All of them may be well

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says bishop Horsley, "to express no more than his being truly man: it naturally leads to the notion of one who had his choice of different ways of coming." Horsley's Charge, p. 15—18.—But the controversy with the Docetæ made that expression proper, which would otherwise have been harsh. And this sufficiently accounts for the apostle's using it, without having recourse to the unfounded and unscriptural supposition of our Lord's having a choice of different ways of coming into the world.

explained upon the supposition of the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, and the majority of them are in fact interpreted by the most learned and judicious of the Arian and Trinitarian expositors as having no bearing upon the doctrine of the pre-existence.

SECTION V.

ATTRIBUTES SUPPOSED TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHRIST, WHICH INFER HIS PRE-EXISTENCE AND DIVINITY.

I. *Eternity.*

1. John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word."

Answer. The beginning of the Gospel dispensation is here intended. See Sect. III. 1.

2. Col. i. 15. "The first-born of every creature."

Answer. Compare ver. 18. The first who was raised from the dead to immortal life. Sect. III. 18.

3. Heb. vii. 3. "Having neither beginning of days nor end of life."

Answer. This being predicated of Melchisedec, and not proving his eternity, it cannot prove the eternity of Christ. Sect. IV. 12.

4. Heb. xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Answer. That is, the doctrine of Christ, as the context requires, and Calvin himself allows. Sect. IV. 15.

II. *Immutability.*

Heb. i. 10—12. "And thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: they will perish, but thou wilt remain," &c.

Answer. These words are a quotation from Ps. cii. 25, and are certainly addressed to the eternal God. The writer of this epistle having cited the promise, Ps. xlv. 6, that God would support the throne of the Messiah, in an eloquent apostrophe he addresses the Supreme Being in the language of the Psalmist, acknowledging and adoring that immutability of the divine nature, and of his wise and benevolent purposes, which constitute the surest pledge of the stability of the Messiah's kingdom [1].

[1] See Emlyn's Works, vol. ii. p. 340. Also Lindsey's Sequel, p. 488: and the Impr. Vers. in loc. Dr. Clarke, though he prefers the application of the words to the Son, as being the delegate of the Father in the creation of the world, admits the possibility that they may "be intended as a description of the immutability of the Father, for a confirmation and assurance of what he had declared." Ver. 8, 9. Script. Doct. p. 81. No. 552.

III. *Power to lay down his Life, and to resume it at pleasure.*

1. John ii. 19—21. "Jesus answered, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:"—"he spake of the temple of his body." Matt. xxvi. 61.

Answer. The resurrection of Jesus is uniformly ascribed in the Sacred Writings to the power of God. Acts ii. 32; x. 40; xvii. 31. Rom. vi. 4; viii. 11. Our Lord's expression therefore is to be understood figuratively; not that he would raise himself, but that he would be raised by God. Thus, when it is said "the dead shall rise," 1 Thess. iv. 16, all that is intended is, that they shall be raised by a divine power. Mark v. 41. John xi. 44; v. 28, 29.

2. John x. 17, 18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take (λαξειν, to receive)[2] it again. This commandment have I received (ελαξον) of my Father."

[2] "λαμβανω, manu aliquid capio, Matt. xiv. 19: alia quacunque ratione accipio, Matt. vii. 3: rursum accipio, recupero, Matt. xix. 29. Joh. xiii. 12." Schleusner.—The word is by no means necessarily taken in an active sense.

If this text is to be understood of the death and resurrection of Jesus, it is to be explained upon the same principles as the preceding: and though active verbs are used, they are to be taken in a passive sense. "I have authority to *receive* it again." *q. d.* If I voluntarily expose myself to suffering and death, I am assured by my Father that the life so sacrificed shall be speedily restored. I shall receive again the deposit which I resign.

Grotius[3] explains the text differently. *q. d.* I have power to expose myself to imminent peril, and I have power to rescue myself at pleasure: so that no person can deprive me of life till I voluntarily resign it, and wave the power with which I am intrusted, of rescuing myself from all violence.

Our Lord, to whom the spirit was given without measure, John iii. 34, possessed a voluntary power of working miracles: but his mind was so disciplined by his temptation, and by other circumstances, as to exercise these powers only upon proper occasions. It is evi-

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[3] "Ostendit Christus aliquid in se eximium. Alii etsi periculo se offerre poterant, non tamen quoties volunt se periculo possunt eximere, quod ipse poterat. λαβειν, κ. τ. λ. *i. e.* vitam periculo jam præsenti eripere." Grotius.

dent in particular, that it was optional with him, whether he would submit to a violent death in order to fulfil the purposes of his mission. When the officers came to arrest him, he struck them to the ground with terror. John xviii. 6.—Had he thought fit to desire it, legions of angels would have been sent for his rescue. Matt. xxvi. 53.—Before the appointed time was arrived, he repeatedly delivered himself from danger by miracle. Luke iv. 29. John viii. 59.—And the apostle Paul, Philip. ii. 8, represents our Lord's submission to crucifixion as a voluntary act, in which he spontaneously suspended the exercise of his miraculous powers.

It may perhaps be objected, that if our Lord had refused to submit to a violent death, the design of the Gospel dispensation would have been frustrated. But this is a case which could not have occurred under the divine government; events which result from the election of voluntary agents being equally certain with those which are effected by mechanical causes. And it is more honourable to our Lord's character to conceive of him as intrusted with voluntary powers, which the habitual rectitude of his mind would prevent him from abusing to

improper purposes, than to suppose that he was never capable of performing a miracle, but when prompted by an immediate divine suggestion: in which case there would be no room for the exercise either of discretion or benevolence. And the language of the New Testament evidently favours the supposition that the miracles of Christ were voluntary acts, while the apostles possessed miraculous powers in a very inferior and limited degree.

IV. *Irresistible Power.*

1. Matt. xxviii. 18. "All power" (εξεσια, authority,) "is given to me in heaven and on earth."

This text does not refer to power as an attribute of Christ, but to his authority and universal dominion, which is a different question, and will be considered elsewhere. Sect. X.

2. Philip. iii. 21. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working (energy) whereby he is able even to subdue (subject) all things to himself."

Answer. That Christ will be invested with authority to raise the dead, is a doctrine gene-

rally received by christians;—and that there is a sense in which all things will be made subject to him, is admitted by Unitarians equally with other christians. That this power, whatever it be, is derived from God, the apostle expressly teaches, 1 Cor. xv. 27. How far this authority is consistent with the proper humanity of Christ will be the subject of future inquiry. Sect. X.

3. Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God, who is, and was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

This is the most approved reading of the text. See Griesbach and the Improved Version. The words are undoubtedly to be understood as uttered in the person of God, and not of Jesus. The words repeated ver. 11, where Christ is the speaker, are certainly spurious.

V. *Omnipresence.*

1. Matt. xviii. 20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Answer. The apostles certainly did not understand these words as an assertion of the

divine attribute of omnipresence. For Peter, without any marks of astonishment at so extraordinary a declaration as that must have appeared to be if he had so understood it, and without any comment, proceeds in his usual way to propose a question upon a difficulty which had occurred to him: "Master, how often shall my brother offend, and I forgive?" The declaration therefore must be taken figuratively. The context limits the promise to the apostles only. See Pearce and Newcome.—Ver. 19, "If two of you shall agree on earth concerning any thing which they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven." This promise must necessarily be intended of prayers offered by the impulse of the spirit. The reason follows: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." *q. d.* Such requests, dictated by my authority, and prompted by the spirit which I will communicate, will be as efficacious as if I myself were personally present.

2. Matt. xxviii. 20. "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world[4]."

[4] *To the end of the world*] ἑως της συντελειας του αιωνος.

Answer. The promise is addressed to the apostles only. It is limited to the termination of the Jewish dispensation by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple: during which interval Christ was often personally present with his apostles; and always by the communication of the Holy Spirit. See Mr. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 74.

VI. *Omniscience: the Knowledge of the Thoughts and Purposes of the Heart.*

1. Matt. ix. 4. "Jesus knowing their thoughts." Compare Mark ii. 8, "When Jesus perceived in his spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves." See also Luke v. 22.

Perhaps the historians might mean nothing more than that he judged from their countenances what was passing in their minds.

2. John ii. 24, 25. "He knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

3. Matt. xii. 25. "But Jesus knowing their thoughts."

"To the end of the age." Pearce, Wakefield, Newcome. *i. e.* "of the Jewish age or dispensation, which seems to limit the promise to that period of time. Chap. xxiv. 3." Pearce.

4. Luke vii. 39, 40. "Now the Pharisee said within himself, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what this woman is——And Jesus answering, said, Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee."

Observe, that the Pharisee expected as a matter of course that a prophet would know by inspiration the character and thoughts of those who approached him, without inferring or suspecting that a prophet was a being of higher order than mankind.

5. Luke ix. 46, 47. "There arose a reasoning among them, which should be the greatest. And Jesus perceiving the thoughts of their heart——" Compare Matt. xviii. 1. Mark ix. 33.

6. John iv. 25. "The woman saith, I know that when the Messiah cometh he will tell us all things."

i. e. All things relating to the true and acceptable worship of God; which was the subject of discourse.

7. John iv. 29. "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

Observe here, first, the very restricted sense in which the phrase "all things" is used. Jesus had hinted at very few incidents only of this woman's private life, and she reports that he told her all things.—Observe, further; that the Samaritans fully expected that the Messiah would possess great and supernatural knowledge of human concerns, characters, and thoughts; notwithstanding which, they had no expectation of him as a being of celestial origin.

8. John vi. 64. "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who would betray him." Compare chap. xiii. 11.

9. John xvi. 28—30. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said to him, Now thou speakest plainly;—now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

From the connexion it is evident that, by the phrase 'all things,' the apostles meant the

thoughts and speculations which were passing in their minds. His accurate knowledge of these speculations convinced them that he came from God: by which they could only mean that he was an inspired prophet. For his knowledge of their thoughts would warrant this conclusion, but would prove nothing relative to a pre-existent state and a descent from heaven. Lastly; the use of the phrase in this sense must to the apostles have been familiar and intelligible: for when our Lord saith, "I came forth from the Father;" they immediately reply, "Now thou speakest plainly;" and repeat his words no doubt in the sense in which he used them, *i. e.* as expressing a divine commission.

10. John xxi. 17. "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

11. Col. ii. 2, 3. "To the acknowledgement of the mystery of God [even of the Father and of Christ] in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Griesbach omits the words in brackets. The manuscripts vary. The relative ἐν ᾧ, rendered 'in *whom*,' is by archbishop Newcome trans-

lated ‘ in *which*,’ as referring to the word mystery. See chap. i. 27.

12. Rev. ii. 2. “ I know thy works.”

Each of the epistles to the seven churches of Asia is introduced with this preface.

13. Rev. ii. 23. “ And all the churches shall know that I am he who searches the reins and the heart.” Compare 1 Kings viii. 39.

Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, saith, “ Thou, even thou, only knowest the hearts of all the children of men.”

To say nothing of the doubtful authenticity of the Apocalypse, or of this portion of it, these passages would prove nothing more than that Christ, in his exalted state, is acquainted with the circumstances of his churches, and with the character of individual members.

14. Heb. iv. 12, 13. “ The word of God is living, and powerful,——is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart:—neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight,” (before it,) “ but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

Though Dr. Clarke (No. 657,) and a few others explain this text of Jesus Christ under the character of the Logos, the great majority of commentators understand it of the doctrine of the Gospel. See Grotius, Whitby, and Peirce.

Remarks.

1. It appears that it was a received opinion among the Jews, that inspired prophets were acquainted, to a certain extent, with the thoughts and characters of those with whom they conversed. And they probably expected that the Messiah would possess this knowledge in still greater perfection. John i. 49.

2. It is evident from the history that our Lord did actually possess this knowledge in a very high degree. He knew the character of Nathanael, and his actions while in solitude. John i. 47, 48.—He was acquainted with the history of the woman of Samaria. John iv. 17, 18.—The death of Lazarus was revealed to him while he was at a distance from Bethany. John xi. 14.—And in many instances he discovers an intimate knowledge of the characters of his hearers, and of the thoughts which were passing in their minds.

3. When it is said of Christ, that "he knew all things," it is evident that the words are to be taken in a very restricted sense. He was not properly omniscient, for he knew not the season when his own prophecy would be fulfilled. Mark xiii. 32. Nor does our Lord ever use this language concerning himself. In fact, the phrase occurs no where but in the writings of John, and he applies it to christians in general. 1 John ii. 20, "Ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things." All therefore that can reasonably be understood by this expression, as applied to our Lord, is, that every thing necessary for the purposes of his mission was revealed to him.

4. The apostles possessed what is called "the power of discerning spirits," 1 Cor. xii. 10; that is, probably, the power of discerning men's thoughts and characters upon certain occasions. Acts v. 3. 9. 1 Cor. v. 4. This was the same power which Christ possessed, but in a much higher degree. In the apostles it was limited and temporary. In him it was no doubt more extensive and permanent. But the measure of it cannot be accurately ascertained.

5. To argue the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, or even of his pre-existence and superior nature, from the strong and hyperbolical expressions which the evangelist John, unsupported by any other sacred writers, uses concerning the knowledge of Christ, especially when it is considered that he applies the same language to christians in general, is drawing a grand conclusion from very precarious premises.

VII. *Christ alone knows the Father, and is known by the Father.*

1. Matt. xi. 27. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

2. Luke x. 22. "All things are delivered to me by my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

Hence it is concluded that there is something very mysterious in the person of the Son, which no one but the Father knows; and that the Son alone can comprehend the essence of the Fa-

ther: and from this mutual comprehension is inferred a unity of essence and equality of persons[5].

No conclusion can be more unfounded. It is plain that he to whom the Son reveals the Father, knows the Father. But what can a man thus learn of God? Nothing surely but his revealed will. In the same sense, precisely, the Son knows the Father, *i. e.* he knows his will, his thoughts, and purposes of mercy to mankind. And the Father alone knows the Son, knows the nature, the object, and the extent of his mission. See John i. 18; x. 14, 15.

3. John xiv. 7. 9, 10, 11. "If ye had known me, ye had known my Father also."—"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."—"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?"—"The Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

Dr. Thomas Burnet, Dr. Doddridge, and others, who contend for what is called the indwelling scheme, understand our Lord as asserting that the essence of the Father is in some

[5] "These words plainly declare that there is something inexplicably mysterious in the nature and person of Christ." Doddridge.—On the other side, see Clarke and Grotius.

mysterious manner united to the essence of the Son, so as to communicate to him true and proper divinity. But this mystical language of the evangelist, when translated into popular phraseology, means nothing more than that our Lord spoke and acted under a divine commission. In the same sense our Lord prays that his apostles may be united with the Father and himself. See chap. xiv. 20; xv. 4; xvii. 11. 21—26.[6]

VIII. *Christ was perfectly innocent, and free from Sin.*

1. John viii. 46. "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe me?"

Rather, as Dr. Campbell translates, and as the connexion requires, "Which of you convicteth me of falsehood?"

2. Acts iii. 14. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just."

3. Acts vii. 52. "And they have slain them who shewed before of the coming of the

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[6] See a valuable note of Dr. Clarke's upon these texts (Scrip. Doct. No. 600); also Whitby in loc.

Just *One*, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."

4. James v. 6. "Ye have condemned and killed the Just *One*; and he did not resist you[7]."

Mr. Dodson supposes that in these texts there is an allusion to Isa. iii. 10, which he thinks to have been wilfully corrupted by the Jews in the original Hebrew, and which, in conformity to the LXX. and to Justin Martyr, he translates thus: "Wo to them, because they have devised evil against themselves, saying, Let us destroy the Just One, for he is of no use to us." This the learned translator understands to be a prophecy of the rejection and sufferings of the Messiah, here and in other places described as the Just or Righteous One.

5. 2 Cor. v. 21. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

6. Heb. vii. 26. "For such a high priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

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[7] "τον Δικαιον, 'the Righteous One,' and he did not resist you." Newcome.—See Dodson on Isa. iii. 10.

7. 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. "Christ suffered, leaving us an example:—who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

8. 1 Pet. iii. 18. "Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust."

9. 1 John iii. 5. "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sin; and in him was no sin."

10. Rev. iii. 10. "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true."

Remarks.

1. The moral character of Christ, through the whole course of his public ministry, as recorded by the evangelists, is pure and unimpeachable in every particular.

2. Whether this perfection of character in public life, combined with the general declarations of his freedom from sin, establish, or were intended to establish, the fact, that Jesus through the whole course of his private life was completely exempt from all the errors and failings of human nature, is a question of no great intrinsic moment, and concerning which we have no sufficient data to lead to a satisfactory conclusion.

3. The uniform and consummate wisdom, propriety, and rectitude of our Lord's conduct in the various singular and critical situations in which he was placed, as related by the concurrent testimony of four independent historians, is a fact so extraordinary, as to preclude the possibility of fiction.

The great original, from which these artless historians have drawn so finished a portrait, must have had a real existence, and consequently the evangelical narrative must be true.

SECTION VI.

CONCERNING THE ALLEGED SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST TO ANGELS.

For the better understanding of this question, it is necessary to introduce some preliminary remarks.

I. The primary sense of the word *angel* (αγγελος) is 'messenger:' and in this sense it frequently occurs in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament. 1 Sam. xix. 14, "Saul sent messengers (Gr. αγγελους, angels) to take David." Luke ix. 52, "He sent messengers (angels) before his face." Chap. vii. 24, "When the messengers (angels) of John were departed."

II. The word *angel*, frequently in the Old Testament, and sometimes in the New, expresses any symbol of the divine presence, or any instrument by which God makes known his will, or executes his purposes. Thus the

pillar of cloud and fire is called 'the angel of God,' Exod. xiv. 19.—The plagues of Egypt are called 'evil angels,' Psalm lxxviii. 49.—And Herod's disease is called 'the angel of the Lord,' Acts xii. 23.

III. The word is sometimes used to express a prophet or messenger of God. Matt. xi. 10, "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger (angel) before thy face."

IV. The word *angel* sometimes expresses an order of beings, real or imaginary, superior to mankind: such as the Jews, at the commencement of the Christian æra, believed to be the instruments of Divine Providence in the administration of the world. Mark xiii. 32, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels that are in heaven."

Concerning these supposed celestial intelligences it may be observed,

1. That it is very doubtful whether the word *angel* ever signifies a permanently-existing spiritual being in any book of the Old Testament, which was written previously to the Babylonian captivity.

It cannot be proved that the appearances in human shape to Abraham, Gen. xviii.; to Lot, chap. xix.; to Joshua, chap. v. 13, and others, were any thing more than temporary phantoms, visible symbols of the divine presence, and mediums of divine communications. The supposition that they were such is the more probable, as one of the three who appeared to Abraham is expressly called Jehovah: Gen. xviii. 13. 22, 23. So likewise is the angel who appeared to Joshua: Josh. vi. 2.[1]

2. It is certain that no names nor orders of angels, nor any distinction of them into good and evil, is even hinted at in any book which can be proved to have been written before the captivity.

3. In those books of the Old Testament which are certainly known to have been written during or after the captivity, and likewise in the Apocrypha, angels are mentioned as a distinct and superior order of beings; they are represented as of different ranks and orders; as pre-

[1] "It is doubtful whether in some cases, what are called angels, and had the form of men, who even walked and spake, &c., like men, were any thing more than temporary appearances, and no permanent beings; the mere organs of the Deity, used for the purpose of making himself known and understood by his creatures." Dr. Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions, vol. i. p. 5.

siding over different countries; as separated into good and bad; and, what is most extraordinary, as even distinguished by appropriate names, *viz.* Gabriel, Michael, and the like.

4. The whole mythology concerning angels is destitute of all foundation in the Jewish and Christian revelations. Antecedently to the captivity it was unknown. By Jesus and his apostles it is alluded to as the popular and established belief of the age; but by them it was never taught as an article of faith. Revelation therefore is no more responsible for the existence of angels, good or evil, than it is for the existence of witches, and necromancers, of apparitions, or of demons, that is, human ghosts entering into and tormenting living men,—all which are alluded to by the sacred writers, and even assumed as facts. The Jews probably borrowed their theory of angels from the Oriental philosophy. Our Lord and his apostles assumed it, and argued upon it as a popular hypothesis, as they did in the other cases: and they left the credit of this system, as they did the rest, to stand or fall by its own evidence, which, in fact, is none at all.

5. When the superiority of Christ to angels

is affirmed in the sacred writings, it is to be understood in one or other of the following acceptations:

1.) That Jesus of Nazareth is superior to all former prophets and messengers of God.

2.) That when Jesus is represented under the character of a judge appearing in state, or seated upon a tribunal, officers under the name of angels, or messengers, are with great propriety introduced as attending in his train to support his dignity, and to execute his orders. How far this scenery will ever be realized, or whether the representation is to be understood in a literal or a figurative sense, the event only can ascertain. But consistency, and, if one may so express it, the *costume* of the picture required, that, where there was a judge, a tribunal, a hall of justice, books of law and judgement, arraignment and trial, and an immense multitude of spectators and of culprits, there should also be a just proportion of officers to support the splendour, and to execute the mandates of the court.

3.) According to the puerile philosophy of the Jews, the earth was the centre of a number of concentric spheres, the uppermost of which was the highest heaven, the immediate

residence of God, and of good angels in all their orders and degrees: while evil angels and demons were thrust down into the lowest place, and confined to the atmosphere. In allusion to this theory, the sacred writers, and particularly the apostle Paul, describe the Jews, who were the chosen people of God, as existing in heaven; and the Gentiles, the rejected nations, as existing on earth[z]. But the Christian

[z] So Mr. Locke, that most circumspect and judicious of expositors, explains Eph. i. 10, where the apostle represents it as the great design of the Gospel dispensation to gather together in one all things in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth, *i. e.* both Jews and Gentiles. "That Paul should use 'heaven and earth' for Jews and Gentiles," says this excellent critic, "will not be thought so very strange, if we consider that Daniel expresses the nation of Jews by the name 'heaven.' Dan. viii. 10, 'The horn waxed great even to the host of heaven.'" Nor does he want an example of it in our Saviour himself, who, Luke xxi. 26, by the 'powers of heaven,' plainly means the great men of the Jewish nation. Nor is this the only place of the Epistle to the Ephesians which will bear this interpretation of 'heaven and earth.' See chap. iii. 15, 'Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.' Whoever carefully weighs the expressions, and observes the drift of the apostle in them, will not find that he does violence to St. Paul's sense, if he understands by 'the family in heaven and earth,' the united body of christians, made up of Jews and Gentiles." This great man adds, with the modesty which always accompanies true genius, "However, this interpretation I am not positive in, but offer it as a matter of inquiry to those who think an impartial search into the true meaning of the sacred Scripture, the best employment of all the time they have."

religion having abolished the Jewish peculiarity, and admitted converted Gentiles into a participation of those privileges which had hitherto been the exclusive possession of the posterity of Abraham, this great event is symbolized by the sacred writers under the figure of a revolution in heaven. And Christ is represented as ascending into heaven, and taking precedence of all ranks and orders of its inhabitants; and all who believe in him are described as ascended with him, and as seated by him. By which scenical representation nothing more is meant, than that Jesus Christ is superior to all prophets and teachers of every degree under the old dispensation, and that all persons of all nations, who receive the Gospel, and who profess faith in Jesus as the Messiah, are now admitted into all the privileges of the chosen people of God[3].

[3] So the apostle to the Ephesians, having first described Christ, chap. i. 20, 21, as "raised from the dead, and set in heavenly places far above all principality and power," proceeds, chap. ii. 5, 6, to state that the Gentile converts themselves, having formerly been "dead in sin, are now actually raised together with Christ, and are now, at this very time, sitting together with him in heavenly places." This language can mean nothing more than that Gentile converts were now admitted to all the privileges of the chosen people. The same doctrine he expresses under a different figure, ver. 14, "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition," *i. e.* the wal

1. Matt. xiii. 40, 41. " As the tares are gathered together and burned, so shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels (messengers), and they shall gather all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire."

This is a scenical representation, not to be taken too literally; and the only certain meaning of which is, that the wicked will in the final judgement be distinguished and separated from the righteous, and consigned to adequate punishment.

2. Matt. xvi. 27. " For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels."

3. Matt. xxv. 31. " When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him."

4. Mark viii. 38. " —of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

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which separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the holy people in the temple-service.

The subject of the supposed superiority of Christ to angels is treated at large, and with great judgement, by Mr. Lindsey, in the Sequel to his Apology, p. 457, &c.

—Luke ix. 26, " —when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

5. Mark xiii. 26, 27. " And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels (messengers), and shall gather together his elect from the four winds."

6. Mark xiii. 32. " But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."—Matt. xxiv. 36; where the words are nearly the same, but the clause " neither the Son" is omitted.

This is a triumphant text to the supporters of the Arian hypothesis; who argue from the climax the superiority of Christ to angels, and from the same climax, and his ignorance of the day of judgement, his inferiority to the Father [1].

The advocates for the deity of Christ feel

[1] " I think the intention of our Saviour in this passage is to declare that as the Father alone is αυτοθεος, 'God of himself,' the alone underived fountain of goodness and power; so he is likewise the alone fountain of all knowledge, insomuch that no one knows any thing, not even the Son himself, but by communication from him." Clarke against Nelson, p. 171. Scr. Doct. 773.

great difficulty in repelling this objection. The common reply is, that our Lord knew the time in his divine nature, but was ignorant of it in his human nature. But this is charging Christ with gross and criminal equivocation[5].—Some

[5] Dr. Whitby, in his Commentary, quotes the explanation, or rather jargon, of Dr. Lightfoot: "It is one thing to understand the Son of God barely and abstractedly for the second person in the Trinity; another to understand him for the Messiah, or the second person incarnate. To say that the second person in the Trinity knew not something, is blasphemous. To say so of the Messiah is not so, who, nevertheless, was the same as the second person in the Trinity. For although the second person, considered according to his mere deity, was co-equal with the Father, co-omnipotent, co-omniscient, and co-eternal; yet Messiah, who was God-man, considered as Messiah, was a servant and a messenger."—Calvin argues that the two natures were so united in the person of Christ, that each could exert its own properties apart from the other: and that the divine nature was quiescent, while the human nature performed the office of mediator.—"Quare nihil absurdi fuit Christum, qui omnia sciebat, aliquid secundum hominis sensum nescire." But where do we find these subtle distinctions in the New Testament; or who can believe that the simple and unlearned evangelists ever meant to perplex themselves and their readers with such abstruse speculations? With much good sense Mr. Emlyn remarks, "that to suppose Christ knows the day of judgement with his divine nature, while he is ignorant of it in his human nature, is charging him with an equivocation similar to that of a person who, conversing with another with one eye shut and the other open, and being asked whether he saw him, should answer, that he saw him not; meaning, with the eye that was shut; though he still saw him well enough with the eye that was open. A miserable evasion, which would not save him from the reproach of being a liar and a deceiver." Emlyn's Tracts, p. 18.

say, that *knowing*, in this connexion, means nothing more than a commission to teach. And others again are disposed to call in question the genuineness of the clause omitted by Matthew[6].

These are all the texts in the history of the evangelists in which any comparison is made, or implied, between Christ and angels, and in which any superiority can be supposed to be ascribed to him. Now, whether the event foretold be, as some suppose, the destruction of Jerusalem; or, as most believe, the solemn transactions of the day of judgement; or, as many apprehend, both events were in our Lord's contemplation, and the less as typical of the greater;—upon any one of these suppositions the representation is scenical. Our

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[6] The clause οὐδὲ ὁ υἱος, 'neither the Son,' is found in all manuscripts and versions now extant: but Ambrose condemns it as an interpolation.—"Non habent codices Græci, quod nec 'filius scit.'" This clause, though not in the received text of Matthew, is nevertheless found in the Vatican and Cambridge manuscripts, and in many ancient versions of that evangelist. It is probably genuine. Erasmus thinks it was intentionally omitted by some Trinitarian transcriber: but of this there is no more evidence than that the clause in Mark was interpolated by the Arians.

The curious solutions of this difficult problem of the ignorance of Christ by the Fathers, may be seen in Dr. Priestley's Hist. of Early Opinions, vol. ii. p. 234.

Lord is introduced under the character of a monarch, or a judge, attended by his officers of state, who are ready to execute his commands. But no judicious person will argue from symbolical figures to real facts. If, for example, the destruction of Jerusalem was the object of the prophecy, we have no proof that Christ himself had any personal concern in it whatever. But, like other prophets and messengers of God, he is said to do that which he only foretells. Jer. i. 10. Rev. xi. 5, 6.—In this case, the angels who gathered the elect must have been the preachers of Christianity, who warned their hearers to escape from the impending desolation. And those which executed judgement upon the wicked, were the calamities of war, famine, and pestilence with which they were visited, and by which the country was laid waste. And probably, the proceedings relating to the final judgement of mankind may be analogous to these, and may bear no kind of resemblance to the scenery by which, in condescension to human infirmity, it is painted forth to our imaginations.

7. Gal. iv. 14. "Ye received me as an angel," *i. e.* messenger, "of God, even as Christ Jesus."

8. Eph. i. 20, 21. " —when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at his own right hand in the heavenly places; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion[7], and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come[8]; and hath put all things under his feet."

The Jews, the chosen people of God, being " the family in heaven," distinctions of ranks among the Jews, such as prophets, priests, teachers, &c., are described under the symbols of supposed distinctions of ranks and orders in heaven, *viz.* principalities, powers, &c. Cor-

[7] " Nomina hæc sumpta ex imperio Persico sub quo olim Hebræi vixerant." Grotius in Rom. viii. 38.—These distinctions of orders in heaven were, according to Grotius, borrowed from the distinctions of ranks in the Persian empire. It was the received mythology of the age: St. Paul alludes to it as such. It was not to be expected that a revelation would be made of so useless a subject as that of the orders and distinctions of celestial beings; nor does the apostle pretend to any such thing.

[8] *In this world*] 'This age,' *i. e.* the Mosaic dispensation; 'the age to come,' *i. e.* the dispensation of the Messiah. See the same words used in the same sense, Matt. xii. 32; and bishop Pearce's excellent note. That αἰων has frequently, and, as the learned prelate says, " most properly," the sense of *age* or *dispensation*, is well known. See Matt. xiii. 40. Col. i. 26. Eph. iii. 21. 'The age to come' means 'the Christian dispensation.' Heb. vi. 5. Eph. ii. 7. See Dr. Sykes's Note on Heb. i. 2.

respondently with this representation, Christ, after his resurrection, having been appointed the head of the new dispensation, which was to supersede the former, and to unite believers, both Jews and Gentiles, into one body, ascends to heaven, and takes precedence of all other prophets and messengers of God, both in this world, age, or dispensation, *i. e.* the Mosaic, and in that which is to come, *i. e.* the Christian: all things being made subject to him, who is the head of that dispensation which includes both Jews and Gentiles.

9. Col. ii. 10. "And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power."

10. 2 Thess. i. 7. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them who know not God."

11. Heb. i. 4. 9. "Being made so much better than the angels:" (or rather, "so much greater than those messengers[9],") the

[9] *Messengers.*] The connexion requires that the word αγγελοι, 'angels,' in this chapter, should be taken in its usual sense of *messengers*, not *angels*. See Wakefield's Transl. and Imp. Vers. in loc.

prophets mentioned ver. 1, "as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

Christ was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead; by his ascension into heaven he had actually been put into possession of his inheritance. In this respect he far excelled all the prophets and messengers of God who had preceded him. And it is with respect to these, and not to angels, that the comparison with Christ is instituted in the beginning of this epistle.

Ver. 5. "For unto which of the angels (or, "of those messengers,") said he, at any time, Thou art my Son," &c.

Ver. 6. "And when he bringeth again the first-born into the world, he saith, Let all the angels (or "messengers") of God worship him:" rather, "pay homage to him [10]."

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[10] Christ is the first-born, as being the first who was raised from the dead; Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. See Peirce and Newcome. —It is well known that προσκυνεω is often used for civil homage, and does not necessarily signify religious worship. See Schleusner. The quotation is from Deut. xxxii. 43; LXX. The words are not to be found in the Hebrew. They are applied to the Hebrew nation upon its restoration from a calamitous and desolate state: and it is with a very great latitude of interpretation,

By a bold prosopopœia, the former prophets and messengers of God are summoned to do homage to Christ, in consequence of his resurrection from the dead, and to acknowledge him as their superior.

Ver. 7. "And of the angels (or, "concerning those messengers,") he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, (rather, "who maketh his messengers winds,") and his ministers a flame of fire."

Former prophets and messengers of God are compared to wind and lightning. They spoke and acted under a divine impulse, and the effects of their mission were frequently awful and alarming, but their office was of short duration, and their powers were transient [11].

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which was indeed common in that age, and in which this writer frequently indulges, that they are made applicable to Christ. The meaning, however, is sufficiently obvious. See Sykes in loc.—The prosopopœia here is something similar to that in Isa. xiv. 9, where the departed heroes are represented as marching forth from the grand receptacle of the dead, to meet and taunt the king of Babylon upon his descent thither.

[11] Another remarkable instance of lax interpretation. The quotation is from Psalm civ. 4, the proper translation of which is, "He maketh the winds his messengers, and the lightnings his ministers." It is an assertion in beautiful and poetic language of the sovereign dominion of God over the powers of nature. But this writer avails himself of the ambiguity of the language, and accommodates the words to the authority of the prophets.

Ver. 8, 9. " But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:" or, " God is thy throne," *i. e.* the supporter of thy throne. Psalm xlv. 6, 7.

q. d. The power and authority of former prophets, such as Moses, Elijah, and others, however great and awful for a time, was but transitory and evanescent; but thy kingdom is immoveable, thy dominion is everlasting.

" A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Or, " companions," *i. e.* all those who, like thee, were messengers from God to men. This is a plain indication that the writer is here speaking not of angels, but of preceding prophets, who might justly be regarded as fellow-servants and fellow-labourers with Christ.

Ver. 13, 14. " But to which of the angels (or, " of those messengers,") said he at any time, Sit thou at my right hand," &c.—" Are they not all ministering spirits? (rather, " ministers [12]," or " servants,") sent forth to mi-

[12] *Ministering spirits.*] *i. e.* ' persons,' or ' inspired ministers.' See 1 John iv. 1—3, " Beloved, believe not every spirit; but

nister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation," or rather, "to those who were about to be heirs of salvation [13]."

q. d. Though I call them fellows, or companions, yet they were not equals: they were servants, he is a son and a sovereign; they were sent to announce and to prepare the way for that dispensation which he was to introduce, and in which he was to preside. They were

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try the spirits, whether they be of God." Why? "Because many false prophets are gone out into the world." A spirit, therefore, is a prophet, one who pretends to inspiration. "Every spirit, (*i. e.* every prophet,) that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God:" and "Every spirit, (*i. e.* every one professing to be a prophet,) who confesseth not this truth, is not of God." So that the word *spirit* does not necessarily signify an incorporeal being, which is the idea conveyed to the English, or rather to the inadvertent, reader: but ministering spirits were inspired persons, prophets of a former age, who sustained the office of servants, not the relation of sons.

[13] *Who shall be heirs of salvation.*] τῆς μελλοντας κληρονομειν, "those who should afterward belong to the Christian church." Peirce.—την οικουμενην μελλουσαν, 'the world to come,' mentioned chap. ii. 5. Prophets were ministers: to whom? Not to their contemporaries, who did not comprehend their prophecies, but to future believers, to those who would afterwards possess the blessings which they foretold, to us who are confirmed in the faith of Christ, by seeing their prophecies accomplished in him.

only his heralds and harbingers to the members of that holy and happy community over which he is appointed to rule as a prince.

12. Heb. ii. 2, 3. "For if the word spoken by angels ("messengers," *i. e.* former prophets, who were only servants,) was steadfast, and every transgression received a just recompence; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord [14]?"

13. 1 Pet. iii. 22. "Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels, (or "messengers,") and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

i. e. The missionaries and teachers of the Gospel, even those of the highest rank and greatest influence in the church, together with all their spiritual gifts and miraculous powers,

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[14] In the remainder of this chapter the writer, seemingly apprehensive lest his meaning should be misunderstood, enters into a direct proof that Jesus, though he was so much superior in rank and character to all former prophets, was not an angel or superior spirit, but a proper human being, in all respects like his brethren. See Impr. Vers. in loc.

being placed under his direction, and at his disposal. See Impr. Version in loc.

14. Rev. xxii. 16. " I, Jesus, have sent my angel," or, " this messenger of mine," *i. e.* John, who saw the vision, " to testify unto you these things." See Wakefield in loc. Or possibly there may be an allusion to the angel-mystagogue, who, in the vision, explained to John the prophetic symbols. See chap. i. 1.

SECTION VII.

TITLES AND CHARACTERS ATTRIBUTED TO CHRIST, OR THOUGHT TO BE SO ATTRIBUTED, WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO IMPLY SUPERIORITY OF NATURE.

I. *Jehovah.*

THIS word, the appropriate name of God, is esteemed so sacred by the Jews, that wherever it occurs in the Old Testament they forbear to pronounce it, and substitute the word 'Lord' in its place. The versions, ancient and modern, have mostly followed this example. That Christ is called 'Lord' in the New Testament is sufficiently obvious: but the present question is, whether this title is ever applied to him in the sense of 'Jehovah.' The supporters of the divinity of Christ maintain the affirmative, *viz.*

I. John xii. 39—41. "Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said, He hath

blinded their eyes, &c. These things said Isaiah when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

The quotation is from Isaiah vi. 10, where the prophet speaks of himself as having had a vision of Jehovah upon a throne. And the glory which Isaiah saw being the glory of Jehovah, it is concluded that Jesus is Jehovah.

This is the argument of bishop Pearce and bishop Lowth, and of Trinitarians in general. Archbishop Newcome explains the text of Christ as the representative of Jehovah, or, as Henry Taylor, of the visible or subordinate Jehovah; with whom many Arians agree. But Dr. Clarke, after Grotius, and with him all the Unitarians, understand the evangelist as affirming, That the prophet saw, that is, foresaw, the glory of Christ, as Abraham saw, *i. e.* foresaw, his day. John viii. 56.[1]

II. Heb. i. 10. "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth," &c.

A quotation from Psalm cii. 25; where it is

[1] See Clarke's Scrip. Doct. No. 597. Ben Mordecai's Letters, vol. i. p. 291. Lowth and Dodson on Isaiah, v. 1. Lindsey's Seq. p. 354.

an address to Jehovah, as it is likewise in this place. The author here confirms his doctrine of the permanent establishment of the throne of Christ, from the consideration of the immutability of God by whom it is supported, and whom he thus solemnly addresses in the language of the Psalmist[2].

II. *God.*

It is generally believed that 'God' is a title not unfrequently applied to Christ in the New Testament. This is held by many to be a strong argument in favour of his true and proper deity. But as it is undeniable that the word is used in different senses in the sacred writings, the Arians explain it, when applied to Christ, as expressive of his delegated dominion over the world and church. This also is the sense in which the word was understood by the old Socinian writers. The Unitarians plead that Christ is called God, as being a prophet

[2] Some argue from Rom. x. 13, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved:" from Joel ii. 32. But the words may be rendered "Whosoever shall call himself by the name of the Lord." Others understand the words as a phrase expressing the professors of religion, the worshippers of the true God.

invested with miraculous powers; in the same sense in which, Exod. vii. 1, Moses is said to be a god to Pharaoh. But Mr. Lindsey, Seq. p. 198, and some modern advocates for the Unitarian doctrine, deny that Jesus is ever styled God in the New Testament.

It is very remarkable that some of those lofty titles and characters which are attributed to Christ, and which are thought by many to indicate his superior nature and dignity, are also used of christians in general, who are said "to be one with him and with the Father," "assessors with him in heavenly places," and "to be filled with all the fulness of God." But there is one expression, *viz.* "partakers of a divine nature," applied by the apostle Peter, 2 Pet. i. 4, to all believers, which is stronger than any which are used of Christ, and which, if it had been applied to him, would have been held forth as an irrefragable proof of his proper deity: to such an argument it would have been very difficult to have given a satisfactory reply. That explanation of the words which all are now constrained to admit, would then have been treated as a forced and languid interpretation, and an attempt, hardly consistent

with honesty, to wrest plain words from their natural and obvious meaning, in order to bend them to a preconceived hypothesis. This instance shows how little stress is to be laid on such phraseology, and how cautious we ought to be of interpreting these strong expressions in a literal sense.

I. Matt. i. 23. "—that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, Behold, a virgin shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us."

Answer. Not to insist upon the evidence produced, Sect. II., of the spuriousness of the first two chapters of the gospel of Matthew, the prophecy here cited, from Isaiah vii. 14, has no relation to the birth of the Messiah. The design of the prophet is, to announce that before a young woman, shortly to be married, should have a son grown up to years of discretion, the two kingdoms of Syria and Israel should be overthrown. The name Immanuel, given in prophetic vision to this child, was a symbol that God would be with and deliver his chosen people. And had that name been given to Christ in prophecy, or otherwise, it would

have meant nothing more[3]. It was common among the Jews to give significant names, and in those names to introduce the name of God; *viz.* Adonijah, My Lord is Jehovah, —Eliezer, God is my helper. And, Jer. xxxiii. 16, Jerusalem is called The Lord our righteousness.

II. Luke i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he (John) shall go before him, *i. e.* the Lord their God, in the spirit and power of Elias."

This is the language of the angel to Zecharias: but the doubtful authenticity of this story has been already noticed, Sect. II.

And though strictness of construction warrants the application of the pronoun *him* to the antecedent *God*, yet as the phrase 'Lord our God' is never applied to Christ in the New Testament, no Jew would ever think of such an application of the words. John was the forerunner of the Lord their God, by being the

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[3] "God was with us in Christ, by his wisdom and power communicated to him for the instruction and benefit of men." Lindsey's Seq. p. 181.—See Lowth and Dodson on Isaiah vii. 14.

forerunner of Jesus, the great messenger of God to mankind[4].

III. John i. 1. " —and the Word was God," or, " a god."

i. e. An inferior God derived from the Supreme, and delegated by him,—or, ' God was Wisdom ;'—or, ' the Word, *i. e.* the Teacher, was a prophet endued with miraculous powers ;' —or, if the conjecture of Crellius and others be allowed, Θεϐ for Θεος, ' the Word was God's ;' ' the teacher was sent from God.' See Sect III. 1.

IV. John x. 33. " For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

Our Lord had just declared, ver. 31, " I and my Father are one."

But he peremptorily denies the conclusion which the Jews drew from his language. He even maintains, ver. 34, 35, that if he had given himself the appellation of God, he should

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[4] " He will lead the way in the sight of God." Wakefield, with whom archbishop Newcome agrees. — Dr. Clarke (Scr. Doct. 534,) admits that the construction of the sentence is favourable to the orthodox interpretation, but that this is contrary to the style of Luke, and to the whole analogy of Scripture. Calvin, Castalio, and Waterland (Serm. p. 203), lay great stress upon this text.

have been fully justified by the Jewish Scriptures, in which this name is given to prophets and magistrates. But that as to himself, though possessed of powers superior to those of any former prophet, he had never affected to call himself by a higher title than the Son of God.

V. John xx. 28. "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

This is a sudden exclamation of astonishment and joy. *q. d.* My Lord! and my God! How great is thy power! Or, My Lord, and my God, has done this!—It is however objected that the words are expressly said to be addressed to Christ, and are an acknowledgement of his proper deity, for which the apostle would have been severely reproved if he had been wrong[5].

But who can believe that this sceptical apostle, who immediately before had been doubting whether his Master was a living man, would,

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[5] Whitby's Last Thoughts, p. 77. Lindsey's Apol. p. 29; Sequel, p. 200. Archbishop Newcome in loc.

[6] Erasmus, Grotius, and Beza in loc. Dr. Doddridge calls these words "an irrefragable argument of the deity of our blessed Lord."

from the sensible and satisfactory evidence he had now obtained of his resurrection, directly infer that he was the living and eternal God? What an infinite distance between the premises and the conclusion! If, then, the words are not to be taken as a mere exclamation, but as an address to Christ, the apostle's meaning seems to be, *q. d.* Convinced of the truth of thy resurrection, I acknowledge thee as my master, and submit to thee as my god, as a prophet coming with divine credentials, and supported by divine authority. See John x. 34, 35.

Erasmus, Grotius, and others remark that this is the first, and indeed the only instance occurring in the Gospels, in which Christ is addressed by his disciples under the title of God. And this fact may be fairly considered as a presumption that he never was addressed by them under this name, and that the words of the apostle are to be understood as an exclamation only.

VI. Acts xx. 28. " —and to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood."

" The blood of Christ," says Dr. Doddridge, " is here called the blood of God, as being the blood of that man who is God with us. And I

cannot but apprehend that it was by the special direction of the Holy Spirit that so remarkable an expression was used."

"Our Scriptures," says St. Athanasius, "nowhere mention the blood of God. Such impudent expressions are only used by Arians[7]." So widely do these eminent and learned writers differ.

The true reading is unquestionably Κυριε, 'Lord.' This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, Cambridge, and many other valuable and ancient manuscripts; of the Syriac, Coptic, and other ancient versions; and of Athanasius, Eusebius, Chrysostom, and other ecclesiastical writers. The word 'God' in the Received Text rests only upon the authority of the Vulgate version, and of a few manuscripts of little note[8].

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[7] Ουδαμυ δε αἱμα Θεϱ καθ' ἡμας παϱαδεδωκασι αἱ γϱαφαι: Αϱειανων τα τοιαυτα τολμηματα. Athanas. cont. Apollin. apud Wetstein. in loc.

[8] See Imp. Vers. in loc. and Griesbach's invaluable note in his second edition. This happens rather unfortunate for the credit of Dr. Doddridge's pious remark. For surely the Holy Spirit which inspired, would also have preserved the text. Mr. Wakefield retains the word Θεϱ, upon the authority of the Ethiopic version; and with Dr. Clarke, (Scr. Doct. 538,) he explains the "blood of God" as meaning the "Son of God." But this learned critic

VII. Rom. ix. 5. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

Erasmus, Grotius, Dr. Clarke, and others observe, that though the word *God* is found in all our present copies, it was wanting in those of Cyprian, Hilary, Chrysostom, and others, and is therefore of doubtful authority.

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did not advert to a fact mentioned by Dr. Marsh in his Notes upon Michaelis, p. 611, *viz.* that the editors of the Ethiopic version had a very imperfect manuscript of the Acts of the Apostles, the chasms of which, *i. e.* the larger part of the book, they supplied by translating from the Vulgate. So that in the Book of the Acts, the Ethiopic version is of no authority whatever. See Marsh's Michaelis, vol. ii. p. 96.

Seven manuscripts only, and those of no antiquity and of little value, read Θεϱ, 'God.' This reading is supported only by the Vulgate and Philoxenian Syriac versions, which last reads Κυϱιϱ, 'Lord,' in the margin. It is cited by no writers before Epiphanius and Ambrose, and they are doubtful.—The ancient Syriac reads Χϱιστϱ, 'Christ.' But in this it is singular, and unsupported by versions or authorities.—Forty-seven manuscripts read Κυϱιϱ και Θεϱ, 'Lord and God:' but these manuscripts are neither of high antiquity nor of great value; and this reading is quite unsupported by the ancient versions and ecclesiastical writers.—Ten manuscripts, of which four are ancient, read Κυϱιε, 'Lord:' these manuscripts are of the highest antiquity and authority, and of different families. All the readings in which these manuscripts agree, are, by the best critics, admitted as genuine. And this reading is supported by the most approved ancient versions and ecclesiastical authorities. See Wetstein and Griesbach.

Erasmus further remarks, that the words may be translated differently, according to different modes of punctuation. He prefers placing the stop after σαρκα, 'flesh.' *q. d.* "Of whom is Christ according to the flesh. God who is over all be blessed for ever." This interpretation is approved by Le Clerc, Dr. Clarke, Mr. Locke, Mr. Lindsey, and the majority of Unitarians.

Dr. Whitby, in his Commentaries, denies that the words will bear the construction which Erasmus gives; and maintains that the text is decisive in favour of the deity of Christ. With him agree Hammond, Doddridge, and the Trinitarians. But, admitting the common translation to be the true one, the Arians and Socinians understand it not of the proper divinity of Christ, but of his supposed dominion over the created universe. See Clarke, 539.

Slichtingius proposed a most happy and plausible conjecture; the transposition of a single letter, ὢν ὁ, for ὁ ὢν, which gives a new and beautiful turn to the whole sentence, *viz.* "Of whom is the adoption,—of whom are the fathers,—of whom is the Messiah,—OF WHOM is God over all blessed for ever. Thus the climax rises gradually, and finishes where it ought. Whereas

in the Received Text, while the apostle is professedly reckoning up all the privileges of the Hebrew nation, the greatest of all, and that which would ever be uppermost in the mind of a Jew, is totally omitted,—that God owned himself in a peculiar sense their God. See Heb. xi. 16.

This conjecture, ingenious and even probable as it is, not being supported by a single manuscript, version, or authority, cannot be admitted into the text. But one may almost believe that the present reading might be owing to an inadvertence in one of the earliest transcribers, if not in the apostle's own amanuensis[9].

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[9] It is singular that Slichtingius proposes it as an objection to his own conjecture, that the phrase, "God over all," is more appropriate to Christ, who was made regent of the universe, than to the Supreme Being himself. "Christo rectius hic titulus convenit, ut intelligeretur Christum non super quædam tantum, sed super omnia dominum ac deum effectum esse."—So extravagant were these great critics in some opinions, while they were so eminently judicious in others. But the strongest minds could not at once burst asunder the adamantine bonds of antichristian prejudices. It is wonderful that they advanced so far. And it is owing to their great energies and extraordinary success, that modern inquirers, who have followed their footsteps, have been enabled to advance still further than their venerable predecessors in the true interpretation of the Scriptures. The principles upon which they acted have not only been successful in their hands in detecting the gross errors of the antichristian church, but have

VIII. 1 Tim iii. 16. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

There are three different readings of this passage.——1. That of the Received Text: "God was manifest in the flesh," Θεος (abbreviated into ΘΣ) εφανερωθη εν σαρκι.

Whether this be the reading of the Alexandrine manuscript is disputed: but it is supported by the majority of Greek copies, and by the later Greek ecclesiastical writers.

But the word 'God' is not found in the earliest and most approved manuscripts, nor in any ancient version of credit, nor is it cited by any early Greek writer, nor by any Latin writer

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furnished their successors with a clue for discovering and correcting their own. No person will now agree with this learned reformer in the objection which he starts to his own happy conjecture.

This conjectural emendation was adopted by the learned and candid Whitby, in his Last Thoughts, p. 79, though, by mistake, he imputes it to Crellius. The very same conjecture occurred to that excellent and judicious expositor Dr. John Taylor, who had not then heard that any one had thought of it before him. Mr. Wakefield likewise suggests several probable arguments in favour of this conjectural transposition, in his Inquiry into the Opinions of Christian Writers, p. 166, et seq

whatever; and, what is decisive in the case, this text was never appealed to in the Arian controversy before the sixth century, when the word 'God' is said to have been introduced into the Greek copies by Macedonius bishop of Constantinople. This word is therefore most certainly spurious [10].

2. "He who (ΟΣ) was manifested in the flesh," &c.

This is the reading of the Ephrem, of four other valuable and ancient manuscripts, and, as Griesbach thinks, of the Alexandrine also; and certainly, of the copies of those persons in the sixth century who complained that Macedonius had corrupted the text:—it is supported by the Coptic and Sahidic versions,—and by the citations of Cyril of Alexandria [11], Theodore of

[10] Θεος is not found in any manuscript of the Alexandrine, or the Western editions. Those copies in which it occurs are of the Constantinople edition, of modern date, and of very inferior value. Of the versions, it is found only in the Polyglot Arabic and the Sclavonic. See Griesbach. It appears indeed in the printed text of Gregory Nyssen and some others; but, as Dr. Clarke observes, (Scr. Doct. 510.) "we are to judge, not from the present copies of these writers, but from their manner of commenting upon the place, how the text was read in their days." Griesbach cites Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Theophylact, as reading Θεος.

[11] Cyril does not cite this text in reply to Julian, who denies that Christ is ever called God in the writings of Paul.

Mopsuestia, Epiphanius, and others; and finally it is much more probable that ΟΣ, 'he who,' should be altered to ΘΣ, 'God,' or to Ο, 'that which,' than that either of these should have been changed to ΟΣ. Upon these authorities it is received by Griesbach into his corrected text.

q. d. "He who[12] was manifest in the flesh[13],"—who appeared in a mean and humble form. John i. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 11.

"—was justified by the spirit,"—was proved by his miraculous powers to be invested with a divine commission.

"—was seen by *angels*[14]," by the men who were chosen to be his *messengers* and ambassadors to the world.

"—preached unto the Gentiles:"—his gospel was published to all nations, and Gentiles as

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[12] Ὅς, 'he who.' See a similar construction, Rom. xiv. 2. 5. Archbishop Newcome, who refers to Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18; Rom. viii. 32. "Lectio hæc difficilior, et insolentior cæteris." Griesbach.

[13] *In the flesh.*] Perhaps the meaning may be, 'he who was really and truly a man,' in opposition to the doctrine of the Docetæ, that he was a man in appearance only. See chap. i. 4; vi. 20. Compare 1 John iv. 2, 3: 2 John, ver. 7. Imp. Ver. note.

[14] See Benson. One copy reads ανθρωποις.

well as Jews were invited to accept the blessing.

" —believed on in the world,"—many embraced and professed his doctrine.

" —was elevated in glory[15],"—he had a glorious ascension into heaven;—or rather, he was elevated above principalities and powers to a station of the highest dignity and authority in the church.

3. O, *quod*, 'that which,' &c. is the reading of the Clermont manuscript, the Syriac, Ethiopic, Italic, and Vulgate versions, and of all the Latin ecclesiastical writers without exception[16]. *q. d.*

Great is that mystery of godliness which was manifested in the flesh, *i. e.* the Gospel which was preached by men in humble life. Many of

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[15] ανελημφθη, "met with a glorious reception," Benson; who explains it of the great success of the Gospel in the apostolic age. But the text will hardly bear out the learned writer in this interpretation. The word, or its derivatives, occurs fourteen times in the New Testament, and without a single exception expresses local ascent or change. Εν δοξη, 'in glory;' not εις δοξαν, 'into glory.'

[16] Of modern critics Beza, Whitby, Pearson, Le Clerc, Woide, Doddridge, &c. adhere to Θεος, 'God.' Calvin, Slichtingius, Przipcovius, Erasmus, Dr. Clarke, Wetstein, Benson, Harwood, Griesbach, Wakefield, Lindsey, &c. read ὃς or ὃ.

the Latin fathers explain the word *mystery*, of the person of Christ.

IX. Tit. ii. 13. "Looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Or, as some contend, according to the construction of the original, "of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," τȣ μεγαλȣ Θεȣ και Σωτηρος ἡμων Ιησȣ Χριστȣ. It is said, that in order to justify the common translation, the article τȣ should be prefixed to Σωτηρος.

In reply to this argument, Dr. Clarke well observes, (Scr. Doct. 541,) that though "the words will grammatically bear this construction, it is much more reasonable, and more agreeable to the whole tenor of Scripture, to understand the former part of the words to relate to the Father: the word *God*, with any high title or epithet annexed, always signifying the Father only [17]."

[17] See likewise Clarke's Reply to Nelson, p. 85, &c. And to the same purpose Erasmus and Grotius in loc.

The author is not unapprised of the great zeal with which this argument for the proper deity of Christ, from the construction of the Greek article, has been lately resumed and pursued by that eminent philanthropist Granville Sharp, Esq. and his learned coadjutors Bishop Burgess, Dr. Wordsworth, and Dr. Middleton. That many of the observations of these respectable writers are

X. Heb. i. 8. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

This is a quotation from Psalm xlv. 6. And it is well known that the words of the original will equally well bear to be translated, "God is thy throne;" that is, the support of thy throne. See Grotius, Clarke, and Peirce in loc. Mr. Lindsey contends that this must be the proper translation, because it is most analogous to the language of Scripture. 2 Sam. vii. 13. 16. 1 Chron. xvii. 12. 14. Psalm lxxxix. 4. Arch-

ingenious, acute, and just, as far as the Greek language is concerned, is, I believe, universally admitted. But the witty and shrewd writer of Six more Letters to Grauville Sharp, under the signature of Gregory Blunt, has ably and amply refuted the argument derived from this principle in support of the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Indeed it is an indignity to the human understanding to maintain that a doctrine, which, if true, would shine conspicuously in every page of the New Testament, should depend for its evidence upon the critical use of the Greek article by the plain and unlettered writers of the New Testament; together with what would be equally necessary, the immaculate correctness of transcribers. If this is the state to which the controversy is reduced, it would be better to give up the point at once. A doctrine of such magnitude as the proper deity of Christ, must have clearer and more substantial evidence, or none at all. That Dr. Middleton's Theory of the Greek Article will not bear him out to the extent to which he has applied it, has been amply and satisfactorily shown in an able critique upon that learned and laborious treatise, by the hand of a master, in the Monthly Review, N. S. vol. lxii. See also Mr. Winstanley's able Vindication, &c. in reply to Mr. Sharp.

bishop Newcome translates, " Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:" but he remarks, that in the Psalm the same words are addressed to Solomon.

XI. 2 Pet. i. 1. " Through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." τυ Θευ ἡμων και σωτηρος. The words may be translated, " our God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Answer. It is admitted that the original will bear this translation; but the common version is also admissible. And it is preferable, because, as Dr. Clarke observes, No. 289, " the word *God* generally stands for the Father;" and the same words are repeated in the next verse in a construction which determines the sense without any ambiguity. " Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord:" εν επιγνωσει τυ Θευ και Ιησυ τυ κυριυ ἡμων. To which may be added, that two manuscripts and the Syriac version, instead of Θευ, ' God,' read Κυριυ, ' Lord.'

XII. 1 John iii. 16. " Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us."

The word Θευ, ' of God,' has the authority

of one manuscript only, and that of little note, of the Vulgate version, and of the Complutensian edition. It is unquestionably spurious, and is left out of Griesbach's corrected text, and of Archbishop Newcome's, Mr. Wakefield's, and the Improved versions.

XIII. 1 John v. 20. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Christ Jesus. THIS (οὗτος) is the true God and eternal Life."

"To paraphrase this of true religion," says Dr. Doddridge, in his note upon the text, "is quite enervating the force of Scripture, and taking a liberty with plain words by no means to be allowed. It is an argument of the deity of Christ, which almost all who have written in its defence have urged, and which I think none who have opposed it have even appeared to answer [18]."

Let us try the learned expositor's principle by the application of it to a similar case.

[18] Dr. Doddridge is particularly unfortunate in the selection of most of those texts upon which he professes to lay the greatest stress in support of his system. See particularly his notes upon Acts xx. 28; and Rev. i. 8. 11.

2 John v. 7. "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. THIS (οὗτος) is a deceiver and antichrist."

According to Dr. Doddridge's mode of reasoning, to refer the singular pronoun *this*, to a remote and plural antecedent, "is taking a liberty with plain words by no means to be allowed." This, then, is an argument to prove that Jesus Christ was an impostor, and even antichrist, which none who espouse his doctrine "have even appeared to answer."

Upon the same principles, therefore, by which Dr. Doddridge and others would prove that Jesus Christ is the true God, they might prove that he is a deceiver and antichrist; which indeed he would have been, had he pretended to be, what they erroneously call him, the true God.

In both instances the pronoun ὅστος, *this*, which usually belongs to the proximate, is to be connected with the remote antecedent. The deceiver and antichrist is he who confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, or, that he is a real man. The true God is that Being whom Jesus hath given his disciples understanding to know: it is his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

From the review of the preceding texts we may remark;

1. That the number of texts in which it can be presumed that Jesus is called 'God,' is comparatively very small.

2. That of these, some are evidently spurious, and in others the application of the epithet to Christ is by no means clear and decisive.

3. That if the title *God* is ever applied to Christ, which perhaps may be admitted in one or two instances, it is in that inferior sense which our Lord himself explains, John x. 35, where he shows that in the language of Scripture they are called *gods*, to whom the word of God came. And it is further observable, that our Lord never assumes this title himself.

III. *One with God.*

I. John x. 30. "I and the Father are one."

Ἕν ἐσμεν, 'one thing,' not 'one person,' as Grotius, Clarke, and even Calvin[19] have ob-

[19] "Abusi sunt hoc loco veteres ut probarent Christum esse Patri ὁμοούσιον: neque enim Christus de unitate substantiæ disputat, sed de consensu quem cum Patre habet, quicquid scilicet

served, *q. d.* 'to be in my hand,' is the same as 'to be in the hand of my Father;' for I bear his commission, and act under his authority. Chap. xvii. 11, Our Lord prays that the apostles may be one, as he and the Father are one. And again, ver. 21, "that all who believe may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us."

Dr. Doddridge, who affirms "that this text so plainly demonstrates the deity of our blessed Redeemer, that it may be left to speak for itself," adds, "How widely different that sense is in which christians are said to be one with God, will sufficiently appear by considering how flagrantly absurd and blasphemous it would be for them to draw the same inference." But, at any rate, a phrase which is applicable to believers in general, cannot, of itself, when applied to Christ, prove that he is *in nature* one with God. And in the connexion in which it stands, it may be explained in a sense perfectly compatible with our Lord's proper humanity.

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geritur a Christo, Patris virtute confirmatum iri." Calvin.—Not εἷς, (*unus*,) 'one and the same *person*,' but ἕν, (*unum*,) 'one and the same *thing*.' The Father has communicated his power to the Son. Tertullian, Novatian, Origen, Chrysostom, and Basil, explain the words in the same manner. Dr. Clarke, ibid. No. 594.

II. 1 John v. 7, 8. "For there are three that bear record *in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth*; the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one."

The words included in Italics are manifestly spurious. For,

1. They are unnecessary, and do not suit the context. There is no similar expression in the Scripture. The sense is complete without it: and the spirit being made a witness both in heaven and earth, destroys the antithesis.

2. These words are not to be found in any Greek manuscript that is older than the fifteenth century.

3. This text is found in no Latin manuscript older than the ninth century. In many of the later manuscripts it is also wanting. In some copies it is only inserted in the margin, with additions and variations, which give room for suspicion of fraud and forgery [20].

[20] The text is found in a considerable majority of Latin manuscripts, though it is wanting in many. It appears in one or two which are believed to be of the ninth century, though Griesbach

4. These words are wanting in all the ancient versions. They are not to be found in the Italic version made before the time of Jerome, nor in the Syriac [21], nor in the copies of the Nestorian or of the Jacobite christians in Asia, nor in those of the christians of St. Thomas in the East Indies. Nor does it appear in either of the Arabic versions, nor in the Coptic, the Ethiopic, the Armenian, the Sahidic, or the Sclavonian.

5. This text is omitted by all the Greek fathers, even by those whose subjects would naturally have led them to cite it, who ransacked the New Testament for arguments in favour of

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doubts it. In many it is written not in the text, but in the margin by a later hand; which makes it probable that it was wanting in the older copies, from which these were transcribed.

[21] Tremellius translated this text out of Greek into Syriac, and Gutbirius and Schaaf have inserted this translation into the text of their editions of the Syriac version. A most unwarrantable and unpardonable liberty to be taken with the Sacred Writings. They, however, probably believed the text to be genuine. But what can be said in excuse of those modern expositors and translators, who, in order to serve a party or a personal purpose, continue, in defiance of palpable evidence, and in opposition to better knowledge, to retain this notorious passage in the sacred text?

the doctrine of the Trinity, and who have quoted the words immediately preceding and following the disputed text.

Irenæus cites this chapter to prove the deity of Christ, but takes no notice of this text.—— Dionysius of Alexandria, in his epistle to Paul of Samosata, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, cites the eighth verse, but omits the seventh.—Athanasius never mentions this text even in those books in which he enumerates all the scriptures he can find to prove the deity of the Son and the Spirit.—The Fathers of the Council of Sardica produce John x. 20, to prove a trinity in unity, but take no notice of this text, though more to their purpose.—Gregory Nazianzen, in his five Orations *de Theologiâ*, alleges the next words to prove the deity of the Spirit, but is silent concerning the heavenly witnesses.—Cyril of Alexandria cites the verses before and after this text to prove the deity of the Spirit, but omits the seventh verse. —Leontius, in the name of the Nicene fathers, defends the deity of the Spirit from ver. 6, but takes no notice of the seventh.—Griesbach says that no one of the Greek fathers ever cites the text, nor is any mention made of it in the Acts

of any Council, general or provincial, that is in repute among the Greeks [22].

6. This text is not cited by any of the Latin fathers [23], even where it would have been most pertinent, and where the subject seemed to require it.

It is not found in the Treatise upon the Baptism of Heretics, bound up with Cyprian's Works, though the author cites the verses before and after it;—nor yet in Novatian, who wrote upon the Trinity; nor in Hilarius; nor Phœbadius; nor in Ambrose, who cites the verses before and after it; nor in Leo Magnus, who, in his Letter to Flavianus presented to the Council of Chalcedon, comments upon the whole context; nor in Faustinus; nor in Jerome; nor in Augustin, who maintains that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are mystically signified by the Spirit, the water, and the blood. Bede, in the eighth century, wrote a comment upon the epistle, in which he expounds the eighth verse, but takes no notice of the seventh. All this is acknowledged by Dr. Mill, who is

[22] Griesbach Append. p. 9; apud Nov. Test. vol. ii. ad fin. Emlyn's Tracts, p 313—316. Benson on Epp. vol. ii. p. 645.

[23] "A patribus Latinis non citatur, ubi vel maxime ad rem pertineret, atque omnino expectari posset." Griesbach.

nevertheless an advocate for the genuineness of the text, but who allows that, for about seven hundred years, it was wanting in the Bibles of the Latin church.

7. The best editions of the New Testament, since the Reformation, have omitted, or at least have fixed a mark of caution and suspicion upon, the disputed text.

It was wanting in the first and second editions of Erasmus, A. D. 1516 and 1518, but was inserted in the third, to silence the clamour which had been excited against him. "Ne cui esset causa calumniandi." It was omitted in the edition of Aldus, 1518; in that of Haguenau, 1581; of Strasburg, 1524; of Colinæus at Paris, 1534. In the version of Luther, and the edition of Zwinglius and Bullinger, in the editions of Bowyer and Knapp, it is marked as doubtful; and is wholly omitted in those of Harwood, of Matthæi, and of Griesbach. Wetstein marks it as certainly spurious, but he professedly publishes the Received Text without alteration [24].

[24] "Primum ediderunt illud comma Complutenses; dein Erasmus in tribus postremis editionibus: ex his propagatum fuit in Stephanicas: hinc in Bezanas, inde in Elzevirianas, cæterasque." Griesbach.—Bengel, like Mill, maintains the genuineness

In the old English Bibles of Henry the Eighth and of Edward the Sixth, the words were printed in small types, or were inclosed in brackets. In Queen Elizabeth's Bible of 1566, the same caution was continued. But between 1566 and 1580 the words began to be printed as they now stand, without any distinction, but by whose authority is not known.

In defence of this disputed text it has been alleged,

1. That the text was contained in some ancient Greek manuscripts which are now lost.

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of the verse, after having produced evidence sufficient to convince every reasonable person that it must be spurious. But though he candidly allows that the words are not to be found in any known Greek or ancient Latin copy, he is unwilling to despair; but piously hopes that some copy may still be discovered which contains this precious relic. "Et tamen etiam atque etiam sperare licet, si non autographum Johanneum, at alios vetustissimos codices Græcos qui hanc periocham habent, in occultis providentiæ divinæ forulis adhuc latentes, suo tempore, productum iri." Bengel. N. Test. p. 770, 771.—Wetstein remarks upon this, "Non equidem invideo ei, qui hâc spe lactatur." This verse is omitted in Archbishop Newcome's Translation, in Mr. Wakefield's, and in the Improved Version. "I must own," says the bishop of Lincoln, "that after an attentive consideration of the controversy relative to that passage, I am convinced that it is spurious." Elements of Christian Theology, vol. ii. p. 90, note.

1.) The text appears in the Complutensian Polyglot, published by Cardinal Ximenes about 1510, from manuscripts some of which are now lost[25].

Answer. Stunica, the editor of this celebrated work, when challenged by Erasmus, could not produce a single Greek manuscript in which this text was found. He contented himself with appealing to the Latin copies as of the highest authority, and probably translated the text from the Vulgate into Greek.

2.) Robert Stephens, a man of great ability and learning, published a splendid edition of the Greek Testament at Paris in A. D. 1550, from sixteen manuscripts in the Royal Library. He has inclosed in brackets the words εν ϑεανῳ, 'in heaven,' and marked them as wanting in seven manuscripts; from which it has been concluded that the remainder of the text

[25] Of these, what Stunica calls the Rhodian manuscript was the most celebrated. It was brought from the island of Rhodes. These manuscripts were preserved for many years in the library of Alcala; but in the year 1749 they were sold by an ignorant librarian to a rocket-maker, and destroyed. "This very circumstance," says Dr. Marsh, "may console us for their loss: for as rockets are not made of vellum, it is a certain proof that the MSS. were written on paper, and therefore of no great antiquity." Marsh's Michaelis, vol. ii. p. 440. 844.

was found in those seven copies, and that it was entire in all the rest.

Answer. It is most certain that Stephens had no more than seven manuscripts which contained the catholic epistles. There is every reason to believe that these manuscripts are still in existence; and that they leave out the whole seventh verse. And as Stephens himself has put the bracket in the right place, after the words *in terrâ*, 'in earth,' in his Latin editions of 1539 and 1540, it is highly probable that the misplacing of it in the Greek edition of 1550 was an error of the press, many of which have been detected in that magnificent but inaccurate work[26].

It is further alleged, that Beza declares that he had actually read the words in some of Ro-

[26] Griesbach contends that the placing of the bracket must certainly have been a typographical error, for no manuscript exists which, omitting the words ἐν οὐρανῷ, retains the rest of the text. And he triumphantly asks, Who can be so silly as to believe that Stephens possessed seven manuscripts containing the disputed text, not one of which now exists: or if one, why is it not produced? Or let the patrons of this opinion show, if possible, how seven such manuscripts could be lost between the years 1550 and 1700, when it is known that Greek manuscripts were in such high request, and purchased at such an enormous price. Ibid. p. 6. See upon this subject Travis's Letters to Gibbon, and Porson's Letters to Travis.

bert Stephens's ancient books;—but this is certainly incorrect. It is not probable that Stephens carried the manuscripts with him to Geneva; nor could Beza have seen in the books what the books did not contain. Beza left out this assertion in the third and succeeding editions of his New Testament [27].

3.) It has been conceived that Laurentius Valla was in possession of seven Greek manuscripts which contained the disputed text. The only evidence in the case is, that Valla does not in this instance note the difference between

[27] Beza's words are: "Hic versiculus, omnino, mihi retinendus videtur: legit Erasmus in Britannico codice—*legimus et nos* in nonnullis Roberti nostri veteribus libris." In the third and following editions, instead of the words in Italics he wrote *extat*. It is difficult to save the credit of the learned reformer in this hardy assertion. Bengel candidly observes, that he does not say "ego legi," but "nos legimus," and seems to mean nothing more than that he read the manuscripts with the eyes of Stephens, as Erasmus did the British manuscript with the eyes of his correspondent there. Beza concluded, from the place of the crotchet in Stephens's book, that his manuscripts contained the disputed text. See Wetstein in loc.

Hence we see the foundation of Gibbon's famous remark upon this celebrated text: "The three witnesses have been established in our Greek Testaments by the prudence of Erasmus, the honest bigotry of the Complutensian editors, by the typographical fraud or error of Robert Stephens in the placing of a crotchet, and by the deliberate falsehood or strange misapprehension of Theodore Beza." Gibbon's Hist. vol. iii. p. 545. 4to.

his manuscripts and the Latin text.—But his notes upon this epistle are few and trivial;—he might possibly have a Latin copy in which the seventh verse was omitted:—or, finally, as he only notes variations in those passages in which he thinks that the Latin text should be corrected by the Greek, he might think it *prudent* not to notice the variation here. See Griesbach, ibid.

2. The text is still found in some Greek manuscripts.

1.) In the Montfort manuscript in the library of Trinity college, Dublin.

This manuscript, given by Archbishop Usher to Trinity college, is certainly that to which Erasmus alludes in his controversy with Stunica, and upon the sole authority of which he introduced the text of the heavenly witnesses into his third edition, where it stands an exact transcript of the text of this Codex[28]. This manuscript

[28] "Ex codice Britannico reposuimus, quod in nostris dicebatur deesse, ne cui sit causa calumniandi: tametsi suspicor illum codicem, ad nostros esse correctum." Erasmus.—In his letter to Stunica he cites the words differently from the Codex: but in his text he cites correctly, "ne unica quidem literula differt." Hence Griesbach concludes that there is no foundation for the supposition that Erasmus's British manuscript is different from the Codex Dublinensis.

was written in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, is of no authority, and evidently interpolated from the Latin Vulgate[29].

2.) The text is found in the Berlin, or Ravian manuscript.

Answer. This manuscript has been long known to be in a great measure copied from the Complutensian Polyglot, retaining even the errors of the press. It was examined throughout in the year 1796 by Pappelbaum, who discovered that the portion which was not transcribed from the Complutensian edition was taken from Stephens's third edition, with the addition of a few articles from Stephens's margin, and the Complutensian, inserted in the text to conceal the fraud[30].

3.) The Codex Guelpherbytanus D, is a manuscript of the first epistle of John. It contains the disputed text, but it also contains the

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[29] Griesbach mentions, as evident proofs of corruption from the Latin, the omission of the article before the witnesses, and more particularly ver. 6, where it follows the Vulgate in reading ὁ Χριστος, instead of το πνευμα, and is the only Greek manuscript in which this reading is found. Griesbach, ibid. p. 4. See Marsh's Michaelis, vol. ii. p. 284.

[30] See Griesbach, ibid. p. 4, and Pappelbaum, Examen Cod. Rav. Berolini, 1796.

Versions of Castalio, Vatablus, and Bèza. It was written in the seventeenth century, and is of no authority whatever [31].

4) Matthæi mentions two other manuscripts which contain the disputed text. One is a manuscript of the thirteenth century, and in this the seventh verse is written in the margin by a later hand. The other is of no authority, having been written since the time of Erasmus and Beza, whose version it contains [32].

3. It is contended that the text is cited, or clearly alluded to, by some of the earliest Latin Fathers.

1.) Tertullian. cont. Praxeam. c. 25. "Ita, connexus Patris in filio, et filii in paracleto,

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[31] See Griesbach, ibid. p. 7. Marsh's Michaelis, vol. ii. p. 263. Michaelis says, "It is entitled neither to collation nor description: but John v. 7. is with many so favourite a passage, that no trouble bestowed on it is thought too great."

[32] See Pope's Letters to Nisbet, p. 339. The latter of these manuscripts is probably the Cod. Guelph. D. already noticed. Neither Griesbach, nor Michaelis, nor Marsh, cite these authorities of Matthæi. On the contrary, Michaelis says, (ibid. p. 289,) not one of them has the spurious passage, 1 John v. 7. Griesbach concludes his examination of Greek manuscripts with these words: "Verissimum igitur est, nullum codicem Græcum inveniri adhuc potuisse, qui comma controversum a prima manu exhibeat, præter unicum Dublinensem seu Britannicum."

tres efficit cohærentes, alterum ex altero. *Qui tres unum sunt*, non unus; quomodo dictum est, Ego et Pater unum sumus[33]."

Answer. In these words there is no reason to suppose the least allusion to the disputed text, which would most certainly have been often quoted by Tertullian in his voluminous works, if it had been found in his copy of the New Testament.

2.) Cyprian. de Unitate Eccles. p. 79, edit. 1700, says: "De Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu sancto, *scriptum est*, Et hi tres unum sunt[34]."

Answer. This was probably Cyprian's gloss upon the words in the eighth verse. Such glosses were common in that age. Augustin puts the very same interpretation upon ver. 8. Cyprian himself was fond of these mystical senses. And Facundus, an African bishop of the fifth century, interprets ver. 8 in the same

[33] "So the connexion of the Father with the Son, and of the Son with the Paraclete, makes three cohering one with another, which three are one thing, not one person, as it is said 'I and the Father are one.'"

[34] "Of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit *it is written*, These three are one." This is the argument in which the great strength of the cause lies, and which induced Dr. Mill to retain the text in opposition to all the objections, in common estimation irrefragable, which he has produced against it.

way, and expressly appeals to Cyprian as authorizing the interpretation [35].

3.) The text is found in a Preface to the catholic epistles inserted in some of the Latin copies of Jerome, and sometimes ascribed to him.—But this prologue is certainly spurious, and is not found in any manuscripts earlier than the ninth century. Griesb. p. 24.

4.) Eucherius, bishop of Lyons A. D. 440, is said to have cited this text explicitly in his Treatise de Formulis, c. 11.—Upon this testimony Archdeacon Travis lays great stress in his defence of the disputed text. But Mr. Porson has shown that the words were not inserted in the earliest editions of Eucherius, and are probably an interpolation [36].

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[35] Augustin, bishop of Hippo in Africa, cont. Maximin. cap. 22, "Tres sunt testes, et tres unum sunt: ut nomine Spiritus accipiamus Patrem, nomine autem sanguinis, filium; et nomine aquæ, spiritum sanctum."—Cyprian, in his book De Unit. allegorizes our Lord's tunic, which was woven without a seam, as an emblem of the church. Griesbach, ibid. p. 15. Facundus pro Def. Trium Capitulor. l. i. c. 3, after having given the interpretation of the Spirit, the blood, and the water, as signifying the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, adds, "quod Joannis apostoli testimonium b. Cyprianus de Patre, Filio, et Spiritu sancto *intelligit*." He then quotes Cyprian's words.

[36] Travis's Letters to Gibbon, ed. 3, p. 420. Porson's Reply, p. 316. Griesbach, ibid. p. 16, 17.

5.) This text is clearly and indisputably cited by Vigilius Tapsensis, a writer at the latter end of the fifth century, in a work written against the Arians. The credit of the text rests solely upon the authority of this writer, who was a person of no good fame, who was accustomed to publish works under the names of other writers of repute, and who is suspected by many to have been the author of the Athanasian creed[37].

Griesbach concludes his learned and laborious research into the genuineness of this celebrated text, with the following just and pertinent remarks:

"If witnesses so few, so doubtful, so suspicious and so modern, and arguments so trifling, are sufficient to establish the genuineness of any reading, in opposition to testimonies and to arguments so numerous and so grave; no crite-

[37] "Igitur comma controversum septimum, præcipue, ne dicam unice, nititur testimonio, fide, atque auctoritate Vigilii Tapsensis, et librorum huic attributorum auctori ante quem nemo clare id excitavit. Jam de Vigilio observandum est parum laudabilem esse hunc scriptorem quod libellos suos sub nominibus fictis Athanasii, Augustini, Idacii, &c. maluerit in lucem emittere, quam suum nomen profiteri. Eundem hominem plures viri docti auctorem esse existimarunt symboli istius celeberrimi Athanasio supposiți." Griesbach, ibid. p. 21.

rion would remain of truth and falsehood in criticism; and the whole text of the New Testament would be left doubtful and uncertain[38].

IV. *Equal with God.*

1. John v. 18. "Therefore the Jews thought the more to kill him, because he had

[38] The learned writer adds: "Ego quidem, si tanti esset, sexcentas lectiones ab omnibus rejectas atque futilissimas defendere possem testimoniis et rationibus æque multis atque validis, imo, pluribus plerumque atque validioribus, quam sunt ea quibus utuntur hujus dicti patroni: nec haberent genuini textus defensores tot, tantaque argumenta quæ conatui meo inani opponere possent, quot quantaque fautoribus hujus dicti supra opposita sunt." Griesbach, ibid. ad fin.

The latest champions of this forlorn hope are Knittel, Hezelius, and Travis, whose zeal "ἀ κατ' ἐπιγνωσιν a viris doctissimis Porsono et Marshio, ut par erat, repressus ac castigatus." Griesbach.—The replies to their arguments by Porson, Marsh, and Griesbach have probably set the controversy at rest. Hezelius, "utpote vir veri amantissimus," has already acknowledged his error. And few will have the hardihood to revive the controversy.

The principal writers upon the subject previous to the controversy excited by Archdeacon Travis, are Mill, Bengelius, Wetstein, and Matthæi in loc. Martin and Emlyn's Dissertations upon the text. Sir Isaac Newton's Letter to Le Clerc. Wolfii Cur. Philol. vol. v. p. 293—324. P. Simon. Hist. Crit. c. xviii. Hist. de Vers. c. ix.; and the controversy between Stunica and Erasmus, Crit. Sac. vol. ix. p. 3547 See Pope's Letters to Nisbet, p. 340. The whole evidence is correctly stated by Griesbach in the Appendix to his Nov. Test. Græc. vol. ii. ed. 2. A. D. 1796.

not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his own (ιδιον) father, making himself equal with God," ισον τῳ Θεῳ.

Answer. Jesus never claimed equality with God. Nor did the Jews mean to charge him with so gross a blasphemy. They accused him of justifying his own violation of the sabbath by the authority and example of God; in this respect making himself *like* God. See Clarke, No. 580; and Grotius in loc. Compare John x. 33. Mark ii. 7.

2. Philip. ii. 6. " —thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

ισα Θεῳ, '*like* God;' was not tenacious in retaining this likeness to God. See p. 133, et seq.

V. *Fulness of Godhead.*

Col. ii. 9. " For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily[39]: and ye are complete (πεπληρωμενοι, 'filled') in him who is the head of all principality and power."

In the epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iii. 19, the apostle prays that they may be filled with all the fulness of God, *i. e.* with knowledge of the divine will, and conformity to the divine

[39] παν το πληρωμα της Θεοτητος σωματικως.

image. But the epistle to the Colossians was written at the same time, when the apostle's mind was occupied with the same train of ideas, which he expresses in the same or similar metaphorical language. The fulness of Godhead, therefore, which resides in Christ, is the fulness of divine knowledge, gifts, powers, and authority. This resides in him *bodily*, *i. e.* in reference to his mystical body, the church, of which he is the head. That this is the apostle's meaning is evident from the context. For he immediately adds, "Ye are filled in," or *by*, "him." Filled, with what? with the fulness of the Godhead no doubt, which is the only subject of which he is treating. *q. d.* Ye, his members, are filled by him who is your head; filled with knowledge, gifts, and powers[40]. There is no image in which the apostle more

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[40] See John xvii. 21—23, "I in them, and thou in me; that they also may be one in us," &c.—"The fulness of the Godhead," says Mr. Peirce, "is the same thing which he calls 'all the fulness of God,' Eph. iii. 19: it is that plenty of excellent gifts which from the Godhead was communicated to Christ, by him to be imparted to us in order to the filling us: a fulness of grace and truth. John i. 14. 16, 17: "Ye are complete in him." It would have led the English reader much better into the apostle's thought, had it been rendered, "Ye are filled by him." Peirce in loc. Simpson's Essays, vol. ii. p. 279.

delights, or upon which he more expatiates, than that of the church being the body of which Christ is the head, and of which individual christians are represented as particular parts and limbs. 1 Cor. xii. 27, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Compare Eph. v. 30; i. 23. In consistency with this metaphor, believers are said to be "circumcised in Christ," Col. ii. 11: "dead and buried with him," ver. 12. 20: "raised with him," ver. 13. Chap. iii. 1, "ascended and seated in heaven with him," Eph. ii. 2. 5, 6; and in every respect vitally united to him, associated with him, and deriving supplies of life and vigour from him, as the body from the head.

According to this interpretation, there is no foundation for the argument which many derive from this text to prove the proper deity of Christ, and particularly to establish that hypothesis which represents Christ as God, in consequence of the deity of the Father dwelling in him[41].

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[41] "In whom the fulness of deity substantially dwells." Dr. Doddridge in his note. He adds, "I assuredly believe, that as it contains an evident allusion to the Shechinah in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of the glorious

VI. *Jesus is styled the Son of God in a peculiar sense, and with peculiar epithets.*

1. The Son of God.

Mark i. 1. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

This title occurs upwards of forty times in the New Testament: it is used by all the evangelists, by the apostle Paul in his epistles, and by our Lord himself.

2. The Son.

1.] Matt. xi. 27. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." Comp. Luke x. 22.

Immanuel." But there is no evidence whatever of any allusion to the Shechinah, much less could such an allusion afford any warrant to the strange supposition of a physical union of the self-existent deity with the created spirit which animated the body of Christ, so as of the two to constitute one single intelligent agent. Dr. Whitby, in his Commentary, understands θεοτης of the divine essence: but in his Last Thoughts, p. 83, he explains it, with Dr. Clarke, (No. 645,) of the fulness of divine wisdom and power. Beza finds in this text (illustris hic locus si quisquam alius) the whole mystery of two natures in one hypostasis, and of the equality of the Son with the Father. Erasmus, in his usual manner, acknowledges that all which is said concerning the divine nature of Christ is true, but that this text has no reference to it: "eam rem hic non agit Paulus." He, with Grotius, explains the text of the doctrine of Christ which excels and supersedes the law of Moses.

2.] Mark xiii. 32. " —neither the Son."

3.] John iii. 35. " The Father loveth the Son."

This phraseology occurs upwards of twenty times in the writings of John.

4.] 1 Cor. xv. 28. " Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him."

This phrase does not occur again in the acknowledged writings of Paul.

5.] Heb. i. 8. " But to the Son he saith"—

6.] Heb. vii. 28. " The Son who is consecrated for evermore."

3. God is called his *own* Father. Christ is God's own Son.

1.] John v. 18. " He said also that God was his *own* father"—πατερα ιδιον.

2.] Rom. viii. 32. " He that spared not his own Son"—τε ιδιε υἱε.

Christ was the beloved Son, more highly favoured than the rest of his brethren.

4. Christ is the first-born.

1.] Col. i. 15. "The first-born of the whole creation"—πρωτοτοκος. See p. 145.

2.] Col. i. 18. "Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead."

This passage determines the signification of the phrase to be, The first person who was raised to an immortal life: being thus the first-born of the new creation; the first of the sons of God who obtained possession of the inheritance.

3.] Rom. viii. 29. "—that he might be the first-born among many brethren."

q. d. That he being the first-born might have many brethren, who like him should be raised to immortality.

4.] Heb. i. 6. "But when he bringeth the first-born again into the world."

5.] Rev. i. 5. "The first-born from the dead."

5. The beloved Son.

1.] Matt. iii. 17. "And, lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son,

in whom I am well pleased." See Mark i. 11. Luke iii. 22.

2.] Matth. xii. 18. "—which was spoken by Isaiah (xlii. 1), Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, (*Heb.* 'my chosen one,') in whom my soul is well pleased."

This shows that the word *beloved* here, as in other places, expresses being selected to possess peculiar privileges. See Rom. ix. 13.

3.] Matt. xvii. 5. "—a voice came out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

This was on the mount of transfiguration. See Mark ix. 7. Luke ix. 35. 2 Pet. i. 17.

6. Christ is the only begotten Son—*μονογενης*.

1.] John i. 14. "—we beheld his glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father."

2.] Ver. 18. "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father."

3.] John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son."

4.] Ver. 18. "—he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

5.] 1 John iv. 9. "God sent his only-begotten Son into the world."

These are the only passages in the New Testament in which the word occurs in reference to Christ[42].

Observe here, 1. That John is the only one of the sacred writers who applies the title 'only-begotten' to Christ.—2. That this word in the original properly signifies 'an only child.' Luke vii. 12; ix. 38.—3. That it is often metonymically used to express 'dearly beloved.' See Heb. xi. 17. And the same word in the original Hebrew, which by the LXX. is rendered μονογενης, 'only-begotten,' is in other passages

[42] The word μονογενης occurs only in four other places in the New Testament: Luke vii. 12, "The *only* son of his mother:" viii. 42, "He had one *only* daughter:" ix. 38, "he is my *only* child." Heb. xi. 17, "He who had received the promises, offered up his *only* son."—The word μονογενης occurs but four times in the Old Testament, and that as a translation of יחיד. Psalm xxii. 20, "Deliver my darling from the power of the dog." LXX. μονογενη μου, 'my only one,' *i. e.* my life. Psalm xxv. 16, "I am desolate and afflicted:" LXX. μονογενης ειμι: *q. d.* I am solitary. Psalm xxxv. 17, "Rescue my darling from the power of the lions." Judges xi. 34, Jephtha's daughter was his *only* child. The same Hebrew word יחיד is in six places rendered by αγαπητος, 'beloved:' Gen. xxii. 2, "Take now thy son, thy only son Isaac:" LXX. τον αγαπητον. See also ver. 12. 16. Jer. vi. 26. Amos viii. 10. Zech. xii 10. Compare 1 Chron. xxix. i. Prov. iv. 3. Trommii Concord. in verb.

translated αγαπητος, 'beloved.' Jer. vi. 26. Amos viii. 10.—4. Hence it is probable that as the title αγαπητος, 'beloved,' does not occur in John, this writer uses the word μονογενης, 'only-begotten,' instead of it, and where the other evangelists would use 'beloved.'—5. It is evident that Dr. Clarke has no just ground to conclude, from the use of a word peculiar to John, and unknown to the other sacred writers, that this word is intended to convey the extraordinary doctine, that there is something peculiar and mysterious in the derivation of the Son from the Father[43].

Remarks.

1. The expression 'The Son of God,' or

[43] See Grotius on John i. 14: Matt. xiv. 33: and Lindsey's Sequel, p. 412, &c. "*Only-begotten* signifies being so derived from the Father in a singular and inconceivable manner, as thereby to be distinguished from all other beings." Dr. Clarke, Scr. Doct. p. 239. This is a favourite notion of Dr. Clarke, and his great salvo against the charge of Arianism; but it is quite unworthy of him. He was misled by his hypothesis, and did not sufficiently attend to the connexion in which the word is introduced. I see no reason to suppose, with Grotius, Mr. Lindsey, and others, that there is any reference in the term Monogenes to the doctrine of the Gnostics. The word used at the baptism and transfiguration of Christ was probably יחיד, which the evangelists, writing in Greek, would render by one or other of the words used by the LXX. Matthew, Mark, and Luke adopted αγαπητος, 'beloved.' John renders it by μονογενης, 'only-begotten.' See Simpson's Essays, vol. ii. p. 275.

'The Son,' among the Jews appears to have been equivalent to 'The Messiah.' Mark i. 1, "The Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the SON OF GOD."—John i. 50, "Thou art the SON OF GOD, thou art the KING OF ISRAEL."—Luke iv. 41, "Thou art the CHRIST, the SON OF GOD."—chap. xxii. 67, "Art thou the CHRIST? tell us."—ver. 70, "Art thou then the SON OF GOD?"—John xx. 31, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the CHRIST, the SON OF GOD." This title was probably taken from Psalm ii. 7, which, by the ancient Jews, was understood of the Messiah.

2. That he was the Messiah, or the Son of God, was probably made known to Jesus at his baptism: Luke iii. 27. This accounts for his own assumption of the title upon various occasions. And being invested with a commission of the highest importance, and with powers superior to those of any former prophet, he is distinguished above the rest by the title of 'beloved,' 'well-beloved,' and 'only-begotten Son.'

That Jesus was the Son of God, or the Messiah, was at the same time made known to John the Baptist, and to all who were witnesses to his baptism. See John i. 32. 34.—The miracles of Christ also sometimes extorted a confession

of his Messiahship from the grateful subjects of them, and from the admiring multitude. But the grand and decisive proof of his being the Son of God arose from his resurrection from the dead. Rom. i. 3, 4. Heb. i. 6.

3. All christians are children of God, being the heirs and expectants of a resurrection to a happy and immortal life: John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14—17. Christ first rose from the dead, and obtained possession of the promised inheritance. For this reason he is called the FIRST-BORN, ver. 29; and christians are brethren, and co-heirs with him, ver. 17. 1 John iii. 2.

4. There is no sufficient evidence to prove that Jesus is called 'the Son of God' for any other reason than as being the Messiah. Neither because he is the second person in the Trinity—nor because he is a necessary emanation from the Father—nor because he is the voluntary but uncreated production of the Father's power—nor because he is the first and greatest of created beings—nor because he is the mediator between God and man—nor because of his exaltation to universal authority and dominion, as the old Socinians believed—nor because of his own plenary inspiration, being also the fountain of spiritual gifts, and

appointed to the office of universal judge, which was the opinion of Dr. Lardner[44].

VII. *Christ the Image of God, the Effulgence of Divine Glory.*

1. 2 Cor. iv. 4. "—lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Chap. iii. 16. The teachers of the Gospel reflecting as mirrors the rays which are continually pouring upon them from Christ, gradually become perfect and resplendent images of Christ: That is, they clearly exhibit the doctrine which he has commissioned them to teach. In a similar sense Christ is the image of God, reflecting the light derived from him;

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[44] It is announced by the angel, Luke i. 35, that Jesus should be called 'the Son of God' on account of his miraculous conception. But as it does not appear that he ever received that appellation from any one on that account, it being generally allowed that the fact, if true, was unknown during his personal ministry, this circumstance is rather an additional presumption against the truth of the narrative.

Upon this subject see Dr. Watts's Works, vol. vi. p. 647. Ridgley's Body of Divinity, vol. i. p. 124. Clarke's Scr. Doct. part ii. sect. 13. Lardner on the Logos, p. 29. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 139, and p. 412. Slichtingius on 1 John iv. 9. Grotius on Matt. xiv. 33. Dr. Price's Sermons, p. 110. Dr. Carpenter's Letters to Mr. Veysie, p. 181.

clearly manifesting his heavenly doctrine to all who are willing to receive it.

2. Col. i. 15. " —he is the image of the invisible God[45]."

3. Heb. i. 3. " Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

" The brightness of his glory," (απαυγασμα της δοξης), " the effulgent ray of his glory," Doddridge[46].

Hence the Nicene fathers infer that the Son is ὁμοουσιος, co-essential with the Father, " God of God, Light of Light, of the same nature and substance with the Father: begotten and not

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[45] Compare 1 Cor. xi. 7, where the man is said to be the image and glory, or the glorious image, of God. The words are indeed used in a different sense from that in which they are applied to Christ, but the example sufficiently shows that no argument can be drawn from such language in favour of the pre-existence and superior nature of Christ.

[46] " Απαυγασμα, splendor solis repercussus." Schleusner:— " qualis est solis in nube qui dicitur παρηλιος." Grotius.—In this sense Christ is the bright reflected image of God: as 2 Cor. iv. 4. ἡλιε φεγγος, Hesychius.—εκλαμψις, Suidas & Phavorinus.—ακτις ἡλιε, Lex. MS. Bibl. Coislin. apud Schleus.—' A ray of the sun's light.' The sense is the same: Christ derives from the Father the light which he diffuses. Suicer. Thes. vol. i. p. 425. Wetstein in loc.

made." And Dr. Clarke and Mr. Peirce argue that the derivation of the Son is immediately from the Father himself, and in a way different from that of all created beings[47].

But nothing can be more unreasonable than to draw such important and extraordinary conclusions from a metaphorical expression; the plain meaning of which is no more than this, that Christ was sent by God to give light to the world. John viii. 12. Chap. i. 4—10.

"The express image of his person," χαρακτηρ της ὑποστασεως αὐτου. "An image of himself," or "of his very self[48]." So John xiv. 9, Jesus

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[47] See Nicene Creed, and Dr. Whitby in loc. "In both the expressions here used our author may perhaps design to distinguish Christ from all other beings, and to show how much he transcends them. To this purpose he represents him as immediately derived from God—no one intervening as the minister or means of that derivation." Peirce.—See also Dr. Clarke's Scr. Doct. No. 950, and part ii. § 12, p. 237. But there must be an end of the use of all figurative language, if metaphors are to be strained to a sense so remote from their usual and obvious meaning.

[48] "χαρακτηρ, ipsa imago, ac figura, alicui rei, (v. g. nummo) impressa, aut insculpta: a χαρασσω, insculpo aliquid vel ligno, vel ferro, vel plumbo, vel alii materiæ." Schleusner.—An image engraven upon coin, or on a seal. See Wetstein. "Insculpta forma." Beza.—ὑποστασις, substance, reality in opposition to mere appearance. Φαντασιαν μεν εχειν πλουτου, ὑποστασιν δε μη.

saith, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Christ was truly the image of God in his moral excellences; but perhaps more properly,

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Artemidorus ap. Wetsten. where there are many similar examples. *q. d.* "an engraving of his real self." This word occurs only in four other places in the New Testament, and in a similar sense. 2 Cor. ix. 4, "lest we," not to say you, "should be ashamed in this same confident boasting:" εν τη ὑποστασει ταυτη της καυχ. 'in this self-same boasting.' The same words occur again chap. xi. 17. In Heb. iii. 14, we read, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence (την αρχην της ὑποστασεως ἡμων, our earnest, our sincere, in opposition to feigned and hypocritical, beginning), steadfast unto the end." Heb. xi. 1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for," ελπιζομενων ὑποστασις, it is "realizing the objects of hope." And this, reader, is all the countenance which the Scripture gives to the furious and endless controversies which have existed concerning essences and hypostases in the doctrine of the Trinity and the person of Christ. Hear Beza. That learned and zealous expositor prefers *persona* to *substantia* as a translation of ὑποστασις, because many are apt to confound *substance* ὑποστασις, and *essence* ουσια. "Deinde hoc etiam commodi habet ista interpretatio, quòd hypostases adversus Sabellium apertè distinguit, et το ὁμοουσιον confirmat adversus Arianos." How surprised would the sacred writer have been, could he have foreseen the subtle metaphysical distinctions and the wild disputes to which his rhetorical expressions have given birth!

N. B. There is no foundation for the use of the epithet *express*, as if χαρακτηρ was a more perfect likeness than εικων.—the former properly expressing an engraving, the latter an image. But they are sometimes used promiscuously. See Schleusner. Also Mr. Simpson's Essays, vol. ii. p. 235. Dr. Carpenter's Rep. to Mr. Veysie, p. 190.

in this connexion, Christ is said to be the image of the Father, as having completely revealed the Father's will, and confirmed his doctrine by his miraculous works. John xiv. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

VIII. *Lord of Glory.*

1. 1 Cor. ii. 8. " —had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory:" *q. d.* their glorious Lord, or Master.

2. James ii. 1. " My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons."

The words in italics are not in the original. The passage may be translated either ' the faith of our glorious Master,' or ' the glorious faith of our Master Jesus Christ.' Dr. Clarke prefers the latter. Ser. Doct. No. 663. See 2 Cor. iv. 4.

IX. *Alpha and Omega, First and Last.*

1. Rev. i. 8. " I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Griesbach's text reads, " I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God," &c. This is to

be understood of the Father, to whom alone the attribute of omnipotence belongs.

2. Rev. i. 10, 11. "And I heard behind me a great voice, saying [*I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and*] what thou seest write in a book."

This is certainly spoken in the person of Christ: and, from the repetition of the words in ver. 8, Dr. Doddridge and others have strongly insisted upon this text as a decisive argument in support of the proper deity of Christ.

But the words in brackets, upon which the argument rests, are wanting in the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and many other manuscripts; in the Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate versions; they are excluded from the Complutensian edition, also from those of Geneva, Plantin, Bengel, and Griesbach; and from the English translations of Newcome and the Improved Version.

It must, however, be admitted, that, though the words in this text are probably interpolated, in other passages in this book, and even in this vision, see ver. 17, 18, our Lord applies the very same, or nearly the same, epithets to

himself. All therefore which can justly be advanced in reply to the argument above mentioned, is, that Dr. Doddridge [49] and other expositors have laid greater stress upon the words than they will properly bear;—that they are not intended to express self-existence, but solely that the christian dispensation was begun, and will be completed by Christ, who is the author and the finisher of our faith.

3. Rev. i. 17, 18. "Fear not: I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead," &c.

4. Rev. ii. 8. "These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive."

5. Rev. xxii. 13. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last [50]."

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[49] Dr. Doddridge, in his note upon this text, remarks: "I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has done more than any other in the Bible towards preventing me from giving into that scheme which would make our Lord Jesus Christ nothing more than a deified creature." The learned expositor was not aware of the spuriousness of this text. Indeed the posthumous volumes of the Family Expositor were evidently left in a very unfinished state.

[50] "πρωτος, summus dignitate, Joh. i. 15, εσχατος, contemptissimus hominum." Grotius.—"They who apply these texts to

In reasoning from the Book of Revelation, it should not be forgotten that this is one of the books the genuineness of which was much contested in the primitive church, and which therefore, as Dr. Lardner observes, Hist. of Apost. vol. i. p. 30, "ought not to be alleged as affording, alone, sufficient proof of any doctrine[51]."

X. *Christ is Lord, Lord of all.*

1. John xiii. 13. "Ye call me Master, (ὁ διδασκαλος, 'the Teacher,') and Lord, (ὁ κυριος, 'the Master,') and ye say well, for *so* I am."

The word Κυριος, commonly translated 'Lord,' properly signifies 'Master,' in opposition to δουλος, 'slave.' So ver. 16: "The servant, δουλος, is not greater than his Lord, κυριος." In this sense this title is challenged by Christ, and in this sense it was used of him, and to him, by

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prove Christ to be the supreme God, and parallel them with Isa. xliv. 6; xlviii. 12, should ask themselves how it can be said of God that he was dead, or, if dead, who could bring him to life again." Lindsey's Sequel, p. 293. See also Wetstein in loc.

[51] Mr. Evanson, who admits the divine authority of the Apocalypse, nevertheless rejects the epistles to the churches, for reasons which he assigns in his Disson. p. 338.

his disciples. See Luke xii. 42—48. John xv. 15. Rom. xiv. 7, 8.[52]

2. Matt. xxii. 41—46. "How then doth David, in spirit, call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord," &c. "If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son?" See Psalm cx. 1. Compare Mark xii. 38. Luke xx. 41.

If this Psalm is a prophecy of Christ, and if our Lord is not merely arguing with the Jews upon their own principles, as in the case of demoniacs, Matt. xii. 27, the proper answer to this question seems to be, that the Psalmist was transported in vision to the age of the Messiah, and speaks as though he were contemporary with Christ. This mode of writing was not unusual with the prophets. See Isaiah liii. David, like Abraham, was permitted to see the day of Christ. John viii. 56.

3. Acts x. 36. "The word which God sent to the children of Israel by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all." Οὗτος ἐστι πάντων κυριος.

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[52] "Κυριος is a title of authority given to kings, Gen. xl. 1; to princes, nobles, and governors, Acts xxv. 26. It is also an appellation of respect and reverence to a prophet, 1 Kings xviii. 7; to a husband, Gen. xviii. 12; to a master, John xv. 15. It is used as a civil mode of address, John xii. 21." Simpson's Essays, vol. ii. p. 263.

i. e. of Jews and Gentiles, as appears from the context[53].

4. Rom. xiv. 9. "For to this end Christ both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead, and of the living."

Christ is Lord of the dead, as he will be invested with authority to raise them to life, and to judge them according to their works. He is Lord of the living, as the whole human race will ultimately profess subjection to his gospel.

XI. *Prince or Leader of Life and Salvation.*

1. Acts iii. 15. "Ye killed the prince (αρχηγον, leader,) of life." *i. e.* the person who, by his resurrection from the dead, led the way to immortality.

2. Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted to be a prince, (αρχηγον, a leader,) and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins."

q. d. a leader to that salvation which consists in deliverance from the power and the punishment of sin.

3. Heb. ii. 10. "It became him—to

[53] See Clarke on Trin. No. 620, and Doddridge in loc.

make the captain (αρχηγον, the leader), of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

4. Heb. xii. 2. "Looking unto Jesus, the author (αρχηγον, the leader,) and the finisher (τελειωτην, the perfecter,) of our faith [54]."

q. d. The example and the judge who will eventually bestow the reward.

XII. *Christ is, or fills, all and in all.*

1. Eph. i. 22, 23. "And gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness (το πληρωμα, the complement,) of him who filleth all in all."

Christ is the head; the church is the body, which completes the whole mystical person, and which in all its parts and limbs derives vigour and nourishment from the head [55].

2. Col. iii. 10, 11. "Ye have put off the old man, and put on the new—where there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all."

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[54] See Simpson's Essays, vol. ii. p. 197. "Qui nobis exemplo suo hunc cursum præiit, idemque ejus erit βραβευτης. Conf. ch. xi. 40." Grotius.

[55] See Hallet's Obs. on Script. vol. i. p. 59.

Jews and Gentiles are by Christ formed into one new man, (see Eph. ii. 15,) which is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor master, but simply the mystical body of Christ, in which all the component parts are harmoniously, and without distinction, blended. *q. d.* All invidious distinctions are absorbed in the profession of christianity [56].

XIII. *Saviour or Deliverer.*

Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a saviour"—σωτηρ.

This title is applied to Christ upwards of fifteen times in the New Testament. Christ was the deliverer of the Jews from the bondage and curse of the Law, Gal. iii. 13;—of the Gentiles from the bondage of idolatry, Gal. iv. 8;—and of all mankind from sin and misery [57].

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[56] Gal. iii. 28, is exactly parallel to this passage in the epistle to the Colossians: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one (εἷς, 'one person,') in Christ Jesus."—"Ye are all one body, making up one person in Christ Jesus." Locke in loc.—Ver. 27, "As many of you as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ."—"So that to God looking upon them there appears nothing but Christ." Locke, ibid.

[57] The word σωτηρ, *saviour*, expresses 'deliverer,' and σωτηρια, *salvation*, 'deliverance in general.' See Acts vii. 25. Jud. iii. 9. 15. 2 Kings xiii. 5. See Simpson's Essays, vol. ii. p. 259.

XIV. *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Rev. xvii. 14. "And the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings." See also ch. xix. 16.

q. d. A great king, a mighty lord. It is a common form of the superlative degree. See Ezek. xxvi. 7. Ezra vii. 12.[58]

[58] Simpson, Ess. VI. sect. 17.

SECTION VIII.

COLLECTION OF PASSAGES WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO TEACH THAT CHRIST IS THE MAKER AND PRESERVER OF ALL THINGS.

I. John i. 3. "ALL things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made."

The whole proem of the Gospel of John has been already considered at large, and this text in particular. See p. 31, where it is translated, "All things were done through him, and without him not a single thing was done which was done." Christ, the Logos or Teacher of truth, was the medium through whom every thing relating to the new dispensation was accomplished [1].

[1] Dr. Price, Serm. p. 143, maintains that "the term *world* in Scripture means only '*this* world;' and that *all things* mean only 'all things belonging to this world:' and that the apostles probably never thought of a plurality of worlds." Also, "that the

II. John i. 10. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

The world was *enlightened* by him: Or, The moral creation was formed, or renewed by him: Or, according to Mr. Cappe, The world was made for him; the Jewish dispensation was calculated to excite an expectation of him, and to prepare the way for him[2]. See page 35.

III. 1 Cor. viii. 6. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him," εις αυτον, 'to him,' *q. d.* his

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formation of the world by Christ does not imply creation from nothing, that probably being peculiar to Almighty power, but only an arrangement of them in their present order." Dr. Priestley, with great force of argument, contends, that there is no foundation for the distinction between creation and other appropriate acts of the Deity. He asks, "Since God is said to have created matter, and the Logos to have formed it into worlds, whether we are also to believe that the Deity created immaterial substance, and the Logos formed it into spirit?" He also argues that it is quite arbitrary to limit the operation of the Logos to this world, or to the solar system: for that, as far as our observation extends, the universe does not consist of detached and insulated parts, but forms one connected harmonious system, in which each part bears a relation to the whole: so that it seems reasonable to believe that it is the production of one almighty and intelligent Being. Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, part i. lett. 3.

[2] "κοσμος pro hominibus passim sumitur." Grotius.

creatures and servants; "and one Lord Jesus Christ, by," or 'through,' διὰ, "whom are all things, and we by," or through, "him."

This is an extract from a letter of the Corinthian christians to the apostle, pleading for the lawfulness of eating things offered to idols. *q. d.* Whereas the Gentiles have many celestial gods, and many terrestrial or hero-gods, we have learned to acknowledge one God only, the Father, the creator and proprietor of all things, whose creatures, whose worshippers, and whose servants we are; and one Lord and Master Jesus Christ, through whose ministration this new dispensation was introduced, and by whose ministers and messengers we have been converted to the christian faith, and invited to participate in the blessings of the Gospel[3].

IV. Eph. iii. 9. "—the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, who created all things *by Jesus Christ*."

The words *by Jesus Christ* are wanting in the Alexandrine, Vatican, Ephrem, Clermont, and other manuscripts of high antiquity and repu-

[3] See Joseph Mede's Disc. on 2 Pet. ii. 1.

tation: also, in the Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, and Italic Versions. They are omitted by Basil, Cyril, Theodoret, Tertullian, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustin, and others: and there can be little doubt that they are spurious, being probably a marginal gloss, introduced carelessly or intentionally into the text. They are rejected in Griesbach's second edition, and in Mr. Wakefield's and the Improved Version.

But if they were genuine, the connexion requires that they should be understood in reference to the moral creation. "The sense most suitable to the place," says Archbishop Newcome, "is this: Who hath created all things, that is, Jews and Gentiles, anew to holiness of life." See chap. ii. 10. 15; iv. 24.[4]

V. Col. i. 15—18. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things

[4] The archbishop admits the words into the text, but marks their doubtfulness by placing them in crotchets: he used the first edition of Griesbach. See Mill, Bengelius, Wetstein, and Griesbach in loc.

were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead."

This text is regarded by the supporters of the popular opinions concerning the person of Christ as a most decisive and unanswerable argument in their favour. And the Unitarians, who interpret the passage of the moral creation, and their arguments, are treated with very little respect even by the most moderate of their opponents.

Dr. Harwood says, (Soc. Scheme, p. 35,) "Words, I think, have no meaning, and are not the true signs of men's ideas, if these plain and clear passages do not contain and manifest this position: that Jesus Christ was the person who, by the direction of the Deity, originally formed all things."

Dr. Clarke (Scr. Doct. No. 550), says; "Nothing can be more forced and unnatural than the Socinians' interpretation of this passage; who understand it figuratively of the new creation by the Gospel."

Mr. Peirce (in loc.) remarks, that "the interpretation which refers what is here said of

our Saviour to the new creation, or the renovation of all things, is so forced and violent, that it can hardly be thought that men would ever have espoused it, but for the sake of a hypothesis."

Dr. Doddridge (Not. in loc.) says, that " to interpret this, as the Socinians do, of a new creation in a spiritual sense, is so unnatural, that one could hardly believe, if the evidence were not so undeniably strong, that any set of learned commentators could fall into it."

Notwithstanding, however, all the severe reflections of these and other learned critics, the Unitarians persist in their interpretation of this celebrated text, as importing nothing more than the great change introduced by the Gospel in the state of the moral world, and the authority and agency of Christ in this new dispensation. In vindication of which interpretation, the following observations are submitted to the consideration of the judicious and impartial reader:

1. Jesus Christ is no where in the New Testament expressly said to be the creator or maker of the heavens, the earth, the sea, or of any visible natural objects.

2. When the apostle descends to the

detail of things which were created by Christ, instead of naming the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and its inhabitants, &c. which is what we should reasonably expect if a natural creation was intended, he only specifies thrones and dominions, and principalities and powers; which are not physical beings, but mere states of things, and artificial distinctions of political society [5].

3. The word κτιζω [6], *to create*, in the language of Scripture expresses not only to

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[5] This is a consideration of great weight, which one would think must make a deep impression upon every reflecting mind. It is curious to observe how very different the detail of the apostle's commentators is from his own. "His nature," says Dr. Doddridge, in his paraphrase upon the text, "has a transcendent excellency, superior to any thing that is made. From him were derived the visible splendours of the celestial luminaries, *the sun, the moon, and the stars,* even all the hosts of these lower heavens, and from him the yet brighter glories of invisible and angelic beings." All this is perfectly natural; and had the apostle's theory been the same with that of his learned expositor, his induction of particulars would, no doubt, have been the same. It is evident, therefore, that Dr. Doddridge meant one thing, and the apostle Paul another.

[6] εν αυτω εκτισθη τα παντα.—"κτιζω, *creo*, ex nihilo produco, item ex materia præexistente formo. Metaphorice, Mirabili virtute aliquid efficio, corrigo ac emendo." Schleusner.—κτισις, *creatio*, is sometimes used in a very lax sense for *ordinatio, institutum*: 1 Pet. ii. 13, "Obey every ordinance (κτισει) of man," &c.

bring out of nothing into existence, but likewise to introduce what actually exists into a new state of being, and particularly to transfer from a state of nature into a state of privilege, and covenant with God.

1.) The advancement of the Hebrew nation to a state of privilege and favour is described as creation. Isa. xliii. 1, "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel."—Ver. 7, "I have created him for my glory. I have formed him, yea, I have made him."—Ver. 15, "I am the Lord your holy One, the creator of Israel, your king."—Hence this favoured people are said to *be*, or to *exist*. Isa. lxiii. 19, "We *are* of old." For this reason the Jews are called by the apostle "things that *are*," in contradistinction to the Gentiles, who are described as "things that *are not*." 1 Cor. i. 28, "God hath chosen the things that *are not*, to bring to nothing the things that *are*."

2.) The advancement of believers, both Jews and Gentiles, to the privileges and hopes of christianity, is also called creation: and in contradistinction to the state of the Jews under the Mosaic œconomy, it is called a new creation. Eph. ii. 10, "We are his workmanship, created

anew in Christ Jesus to good works." Col. iii. 10, " And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him."—Hence converted Gentiles, who before *were not*, are said to *be*, or to exist. 1 Cor. i. 28, " Of him *are* ye in Christ Jesus:" and conversion to christianity is a new creation. 2 Cor. v. 17, " If any man be in Christ Jesus, (*q. d.* become a christian,) there is a new creation [7]."

4. In the Scriptures, and particularly in the writings of Paul, men are often mentioned in terms which more properly express inanimate beings; they are called not persons, but things: *viz.* 1 Cor. i. 28, " God hath chosen the foolish things (τα μωρα) of the world to confound the wise, (τους σοφους, the wise men,) and the weak things (τα ασθενη) to confound the mighty things (τα ισχυρα)," *i. e.* persons, &c. Compare Matt. xi. 27. John iii. 35; vi. 37—39. [8]

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[7] See Dr. Taylor's Key to the Apostolic Writings, chap. ii. § 17. 19; chap. vi. § 99. 102.

[8] See Mr. Tyrwhitt's excellent Essay on the Creation of all Things by Jesus Christ. Comm. and Essays, vol. ii. Ess. xiv. p. 9. " The general language of Scripture," says this learned and accurate writer, " concerning this new creation is briefly

Hence it clearly and distinctly follows, that according to the customary language of the sacred writers, and particularly of the apostle Paul, 'to create all things,' may signify nothing more than to bring men into a new and a better state; to transfer them out of a state of nature into a state of great moral privilege and advantage.

5. The words *heaven* and *earth*, in the language of Scripture, figuratively express the civil or moral distinctions of mankind in a social state.—1.) Civil distinctions. Matt. xxiv. 29, "The stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:" *i. e.* the Jewish polity shall be dissolved. Joel ii. 10, "The earth shall quake, the heavens shall tremble:" *i. e.* men of all ranks, whether of low or of high degree, shall be in consternation. Compare Hag. ii. 6, 7. Acts ii. 19. Rev. vi. 12. 15.—2.) Moral distinctions. Matt.

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this: Believing Jews and Gentiles, considered jointly, are called the whole creation: Mark xvi. 15. Col. i. 15. 23. The Jews are represented as the first-fruits of it; James i. 18; and Jesus Christ as the first-born, or heir: Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 2.—Each individual believer is styled a new creature: Gal. vi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 17. And by it all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are so perfectly made one, that all former distinctions between them are entirely lost in their common relation to Christ." Col. iii. 11.

xi. 23, "Thou, Capernaum, that art exalted to heaven;" &c. Eph. iii. 15, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named;" *i. e.* the great body of christians living promiscuously among Jews and Gentiles: or, perhaps, consisting of both. Compare Eph. i. 10; and Mr. Locke's Note.

Hence it appears that 'creating all things in heaven and earth,' may signify the introducing some great change into the moral or political state of mankind, and particularly under the relation of Jews and Gentiles.

6. 'Things visible and invisible' are phrases of the same import as things in heaven and things in earth.

7. As heaven expresses the privileged state of those who participate in the benefits of the Jewish or Christian dispensations, so the distinction of orders, which, according to the crude mythology of the East, was supposed to exist among the inhabitants of heaven, appears to be used by the apostle, in the way of analogy, to express the different ranks and offices which subsist in the Jewish or the Christian church, all of which are regulated and new-modelled by Christ; who, in this sense, creates all things in heaven and earth, whether they be thrones or

dominions, or principalities or powers. *q. d.* Jesus Christ having introduced a new and better state of things into the moral world, and having formed a church consisting of Jews and Gentiles, without any distinction, has also completely organized this holy community, and has appointed and qualified its various officers, apostles, evangelists, prophets, teachers, and the like, in their several orders and degrees, for the promulgation of the christian doctrine, and for the instruction and edification of the church[9].

8. "All things were created by him" (δι' αυτου): he was the founder of the new dispensation; he appointed apostles, teachers, &c. he supplied them with spiritual gifts and powers to qualify them for their important work[10];—"and for him" (εις αυτον); to accomplish the purposes of his mission:—"and he is before all things" (προ παντων); he has precedence in time, character, and dignity:—"and in him all things consist" (συνεστηκε); he is the bond of union, as the head to the body. So the sentence

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[9] See part i. sect. vi. p. 196.

[10] "παντα, intellige omnia quæ ad novam creationem pertinent. Certum est per Verbum creata omnia. Sed quæ præcedunt, ostendunt hic de Christo agi, quod hominis est nomen: quomodo etiam Chrysostomus hunc accepit locum." Grotius.

proceeds, " he is the head of the body, the church," the source of vital influence and energy [11].

9. Explaining this passage of the moral creation is most agreeable to the context. The apostle is not speaking of natural objects, either in the preceding or the subsequent passages; but solely of the office and dignity of Christ, as the founder and publisher of the Gospel dispensation. No homage is required to be paid to him as the Maker of heaven and earth, the preserver and supporter of all things. This stupendous fact, if here intended, is left in a completely insulated state, without a comment, and without any conclusion being drawn from it but what would follow with equal force, and with greater pro-

[11] " He is before all things, and by him all things consist." It follows: " he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." All this is natural and just, if the preceding verses contain a figurative description of Christ, as having founded and organized the christian dispensation. But to be the first who rises from the dead, though a high distinction for a human being, is but a poor addition to the pre-eminence of one who is the Creator and Preserver of all things, the Maker and Lord of angels and archangels. This, surely, is not the conclusion to which we should expect to have been led by so lofty a description, if the words are to be taken in their primary and vulgar acceptation.

priety, from the supposition that Christ was a human being whom God had raised from the dead, and placed at the head of the new dispensation.

10. This interpretation is strongly confirmed by the consideration that where the natural creation is plainly spoken of, it is uniformly ascribed to the Father. See Acts iv. 24. Where the moral creation is plainly intended, it is as uniformly ascribed to Christ. Eph. ii. 10. But doubtful passages are to be explained by what is clear and unquestionable: wherever, therefore, the expression is indefinite, whenever creation is ascribed to Christ, it is to be understood of a moral creation only, and not of a proper natural creation [12].

VI. Heb. i. 2, 3. " —by whom also he

[12] This argument is Dr. Priestley's, who observes very justly, " If this be not a natural and just rule of interpretation, I am not acquainted with any which ought to be called such: and this clearly gives the creation of the world to the Father, and not to Christ." Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, part i. p. 117—122.—Dr. Lardner refers to Grotius's interpretation of this passage as what he approves and adopts. Logos, p. 69. Mr. Lindsey, Seq. p. 477, observes from Wetstein, " that if we expound this passage by the parallel epistle to the Ephesians, we must understand it to speak of the new creation. Eph. i. 10; ii. 10. 15."

made the worlds [13]—upholding all things by the word of his power."

The common interpretation of this text is, 'That Christ as God, or as commissioned and delegated by God, was the maker of all worlds, and of all things that are contained in them.' This interpretation is supported by Whitby, Hammond, Le Clerc, Peirce [14], Newcome, and many others.

One great and indeed insurmountable objection against this sense of the passage is, that the word αιων in the original is seldom if ever used, either in a singular or plural form, to express the material world. It properly signifies 'ages' or 'dispensations [15].' See Matt. xii. 32: xiii. 39. Mark x. 30. Luke xviii. 30. 1 Cor. ii. 6; x. 11. Col. i. 26. Heb. vi. 5; ix. 26.

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[13] δι' ὃ και τους αιωνας εποιησεν.

[14] Mr. Peirce remarks, that "if these texts are read without a bias from prejudice, and a fondness for hypothesis, they *naturally* offer this sense; that as the Son gave being to all the creatures, so he maintains them all in being." This learned and good man does not seem to have suspected that Arians also might have their "prejudices" and their "fondness for hypothesis," as well as Socinians and Unitarians.

[15] "The term αιων, in the New Testament, whether singular or plural, never signifies the material world." Simpson's Essays, vol. ii. p. 93.—"The word αιωνας, which we render *worlds*,

Dr. Sykes and many with him understand the text as affirming that Christ, as the Logos, was the medium of all the former dispensations of God to mankind; the antediluvian, the patriarchal, and the Mosaic dispensations. Dr. Doddridge renders the words, "by whom he also constituted the ages." It cannot be denied that the words will bear this interpretation, could the fact here supposed be proved by other and independent evidence. But this text will not of itself prove it; because it admits of another very fair and probable interpretation, perfectly consistent with the proper humanity of Christ.

Slichtingius, Crellius, and the old Socinians, by 'the ages,' τας αιωνας, understand the Gospel

(says Dr. Sykes in loc.) does not signify the 'heavens and earth, and all things in them,' but it means properly 'ages, or certain periods of time:'—such were the Patriarchal: that of the Law: that of the Messiah: that of the Antediluvians. Nor is there one instance in the New Testament in which more than this seems to be meant by this word." Chap. xi. 3, which in the public version is translated "through faith we understand that the worlds (αιωνας) were framed by the word of God," and which is commonly understood as asserting the creation of all things by the divine power, is translated by Dr. Sykes, "By faith we understand that the Ages were adapted or fitted by the word of God, *i. e.* by his command or direction suited to their proper ends." See Schleusner in verb.

dispensation only which was introduced by Christ, and of which he is the head. They regard this text as having the same signification with John i. 3, and consider it as alluding to Isaiah ix. 5, where in the LXX. the Messiah is predicted as "the father of the future age [16]." This interpretation has been lately revived and very ably defended by Mr. Simpson, in his Essays on Scripture, Ess. VIII. who maintains, by a variety of arguments, that the plural number is here used to express excellence: *q. d.* by whom also he constituted the Age, *i. e.* "of the Messiah, eminently distinguished for moral and religious advantages."

The principal objection against this interpretation, and which it is doubtful whether the learned writer has sufficiently obviated, is that of Dr. Whitby, in his Note upon the text, "that αιωνες absolutely put doth never signify the church, or evangelical state; nor does the Scripture ever speak of the world to come in the plural, but in the singular number only."

[16] "Secula Deus per Christum fecisse dicitur, non quod omnia quæ unquam extiterunt secula per eum condiderit, sed quod condiderit aliqua, nempe nova et a prioribus diversa, iisque longe feliciora—articulus voci αιωνας præfixus, generalem vocis significationem, ad specialem aliquam, minusque communem solet restringere." Slichtingius and Crellius in loc.

A less exceptionable interpretation, therefore is that which was proposed by Grotius; and adopted by Dr. Lardner, Mr. Lindsey, and many others. 'For whom, or with a view to whom, he constituted the ages.' *q. d.* All former dispensations were arranged with a view to that of the Messiah [17].

To this, which Dr. Lardner justly calls "a most apt and beautiful sense," the principal objection is, that it is contrary to the usual construction of the Greek language, in which the preposition διὰ, when it governs a genitive, as in this instance, usually expresses the instrumental cause, and ought to be rendered *by*, or *through*; whereas when it signifies the final cause, *for*, or *with a view to*, it commonly governs the accusative case.

But this rule, though general, has many exceptions, which are not only to be met with in classical writers, but in Josephus, a contemporary writer, and a Jew. The construction, therefore, of the language will fairly admit the sense which Grotius gives to the text [18].

[17] "Videtur δι' ὃ, hic recte accipi posse pro δι' ὃν. Vid. Beza in Rom vi. 4. Videtur respicere ad dictum vetus Hebræorum, propter Messiam conditum esse mundum." Grotius.—See Lardner on the Log. p. 70. Lindsey's Seq. p. 483. Second Address, p. 297. Improved Vers. in loc.

[18] Of the use of this construction, the learned Newcome Cappe

"Upholding" φερων, directing or governing, "all things by the word of his" the Father's "power:" *i. e.* by authority received from God, and supported by miraculous works [19].

VII. Heb. i. 8. 10. "To the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God," or, "God is thy throne for ever and ever."—Ver. 10. "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth," &c.

This is an address, not to the Son, but to the

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has produced ample proof and various examples from writers sacred and profane, in his Critical Remarks on SS. vol. i. p. 51, where he applies it with great plausibility to John i. 10, which upon that interpretation nearly coincides with the text in Hebrews. It may be further added, that the scholiast upon the Plutus of Aristophanes, p. 6. edit. Basil, notices this use of δια with a genitive, as sometimes, though rarely, expressing the final cause. In Thucyd. Hist. l. vi. sect. 7, the conspirators determine to assassinate Hipparchus δι' ὅπερ, cujus causâ, 'on whose account' they had exposed themselves to peril. Josephus repeatedly uses the phrase δια λογων, to express that persons came with a view to or for the purpose of conversation. Antiq. l. xviii. c. vii. § 7, 8; c. x. § 3. edit. Hudson. The same phraseology is used by Plutarch. See Glass. Philol. p. 1046. Vigerus de Idiotism. c. ix. sect. 2.—Schleusner in verb. ex. 19, cites 2 Pet. i. 3, as an example of δια with a genitive being used to express the final cause. Rom. vi. 4, cited by Beza and Grotius, is doubtful. 1 Cor. xiv. 19, δια νους, *i. e.* with a view to be understood, is more to the purpose. See Locke in loc.

[19] "Sensus est, Christus verbo potentiæ paternæ, *i. e.* jussu, regit cuncta. φερειν sæpe est *regere*." Grotius.

Father, whose immutability and omnipotence are the pledge and guarantee of the Son's everlasting kingdom. See Sect. V. p. 172.

VIII. Heb. iii. 3, 4. "This person was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who builded the house hath more honour than the house; for every house is builded by some one, but he who built all things is God."

This text has no reference to the creation of the world. The Christian dispensation is represented by the writer as an household, (οικος,) ver. 2. Of this household God is ὁ κατασκευασας, the master and regulator: ver. 4. Both Moses and Jesus are appointed to stations under him: ver. 2. Moses, indeed, only as a servant, to announce future blessings: ver. 5. But Jesus, as a Son, was intrusted with the management of the family, ver. 6, and therefore he takes precedence of all the domestics, and even of Moses himself: ver. 3.[20]

IX. Rev. iii. 14. "The beginning (αρχη) of the creation of God."

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[20] See Impr. Vers. in loc. "Ο κατασκευασας, 'he that orders, governs, and presides.' Wisd. ix. 10." Whitby.—"Moses pars familiæ, Christus supra familiam." Grotius.

Rather, the head of the creation of God, *i. e.* of the new creation. See Sect. III. p. 149.

Remarks.

1. In the whole New Testament there are but nine texts which are produced, or which can with any shadow of reason be produced, to prove that Jesus is the Creator, or Former, and Supporter of the world.

2. Of these the two first are, John i. 3, and 10; and in order to draw an argument from these, the word γινομαι must be strained to a sense different from that in which it is to be understood in any other passage of the New Testament, though it occurs there upwards of seven hundred times.—The 1 Cor. viii. 6, is allowed to be little to the purpose.—Eph. iii. 9, is a manifest interpolation: and, if genuine, is by orthodox expositors explained of the new creation.—Col. i. 16, 17, is the passage upon which the greatest stress is laid;—but in this, when the apostle enters into detail of things created, they are not natural objects, such as sun, moon, stars, earth, sea, &c.; but artificial distinctions, thrones, dominions, &c.; and the conclusion drawn, that he is head over all things to the church, &c. is such as might na-

turally be expected, from his being the founder of the new dispensation; but very different from what would properly follow from his being announced as the Creator of all things, the Maker and Lord of angels.—To make the argument from Heb. i. 2, available, the word αιωνας, translated 'worlds,' must be taken in a sense different from that which it ever bears in the New Testament.—Ver. 10, is interpreted by many Arian and Trinitarian expositors as addressed to God, and not to Christ; and by all must be considered as doubtful.—Heb. iii. 4, is most certainly nothing to the purpose:—and Rev. iii. 14, is a text both of doubtful authority and doubtful meaning. Such is the evidence upon which the grand conclusion rests, that Christ is the Creator, the Supporter, and the Governor, original or delegated, of this and of all worlds, of all their inhabitants, and of all things which the universe contains.

3. Had it been the intention of the sacred writers to have communicated the extraordinary and momentous fact, that Jesus Christ was the Maker and Supporter of the universe, it would have been very easy for them to express this doctrine in plain language, which could not have been misunderstood, as all now

do who hold this opinion; and as they have themselves done, in ascribing the formation of all things to God. See Acts iv. 24. 27; xix. 24, and innumerable other places in holy writ.

4. If the fact were true, that the person who appeared under the form of a man, who had been an infant in a cradle, who had gradually grown up to maturity, subject to hunger and thirst, and all the infirmities of human nature, who had afterwards suffered upon a cross, and been confined to a tomb; if it were true that this feeble, suffering, dying man was no less a person than the Creator and Lord of nature himself in the disguise of a human being, the communication of this amazing fact, to those who had no antecedent suspicion or expectation of it, must have filled their minds with astonishment; it must have been always present to their thoughts, and could not but have made the most prominent figure in their discourses and writings. They must have recurred to it again and again, and have expressed themselves upon the subject in every form and variety of language which would indicate the unusual warmth and agitation of their feelings.

5. Notwithstanding all these grave con-

siderations, three out of four of the evangelists take not the least notice of this extraordinary event:—the fourth, if he mentions it at all, mentions it in language which upon no other occasion carries the same sense; and having barely hinted it at the beginning of his history, he drops the subject, and never recurs to it again.—The historian of the doctrine and mission of the apostles for upwards of thirty years after the resurrection of Jesus, is totally silent upon this subject.—The apostle Peter, who speaks in raptures of the glory of his Master upon the mount of transfiguration, (2 Pet. i. 17,) makes no mention of his being the Creator of all things.—James and Jude are both silent.—In twelve out of thirteen undoubted epistles of the apostle Paul, some of them of great length, in which he takes pleasure in expatiating upon the blessings of the Gospel, and the glories of its great Founder, to whom he was himself under peculiar personal obligation, that apostle suggests not the least hint that his admired and beloved Master was the Creator and Lord of the external world. In one short epistle only, and in one passage of that epistle, is he supposed to assert this amazing fact: and this he does in language so unusual, so

mystical, and symbolical, that, comparing what is difficult with what is plain, it may well be admitted that the writer's true meaning may be widely different from what is commonly believed.—The unknown writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, if he meant to declare this wonderful fact, uses language which, in all other cases, conveys a very different sense:—and the single expression in the Book of Revelation, if authentic, is at least equivocal.

6. The obvious and necessary consequence is, either that THE SACRED WRITERS KNEW NOTHING OF THIS EXTRAORDINARY FACT, or, what would be still more extraordinary, that, knowing it, THEY DID NOT THINK IT OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO INSIST UPON IT.

SECTION IX.

THE QUESTION CONSIDERED, WHETHER JESUS CHRIST WAS THE MEDIUM OF THE DIVINE DISPENSATIONS TO THE PATRIARCHS AND TO THE HEBREW NATION: AND WHETHER HE EVER APPEARED UNDER THE NAME AND CHARACTER OF JEHOVAH [1].

It is maintained by many that two beings are mentioned in the Old Testament under the name and character of Jehovah; the one Supreme, the other subordinate, the angel or

[1] This extraordinary doctrine, that a subordinate being should assume the name and the character of the Supreme; a doctrine which to all Unitarians appears diametrically contrary to the letter and to the spirit of the Scriptures, and directly subversive of the fundamental doctrine both of the Jewish and Christian revelations, has been supported by many able and learned advocates, ancient and modern, since the time of Justin Martyr, who probably first invented it, and who imagined that this great secret was communicated to him by express revelation. See Just. Mart. Dialog. edit. Thirlby, p. 258, and Mr. Lindsey's Second Address, chap. ii. sect. 3. The last and ablest advocate

minister of the Supreme, the medium of divine operations and dispensations; and that the subordinate Jehovah was the spirit who animated the body of Christ.

First: This doctrine of two Jehovahs appears to be plainly contradictory to the Jewish Scriptures, which expressly and solemnly teach, that "'Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," or rather, "'Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one." Deut. vi. 4. A declaration cited with the highest approbation by our Saviour, Mark ix. 29. 32. See likewise Neh. ix. 6. Nor is it pretended that this doctrine was ever received by the Hebrew nation. In support of this extraordinary position it is alleged,

I. That one Jehovah is represented as the object of the senses,—He walked in the garden, and his voice was heard by Adam,

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of this strange hypothesis was the late Mr. Henry Taylor, in a book entitled The Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai to Elisha Levi, Lett. ii. and iii. The arguments of this learned writer have been so thoroughly discussed, and so completely refuted, by Mr. Lindsey, in the Sequel to his Apology, chap. vi. that if such an issue could be hoped for in a theological discussion, it might be presumed that the question was now set finally, and for ever, at rest. This Section contains a brief abstract of the argument on both sides.

Gen. iii. 8;—he descended to see the tower of Babel, chap. xi. 5;—the God of Israel was seen by the seventy elders, Exod. xxiv. 9;—He talked with Moses from the mercy-seat, chap. xxvi. 21, 22,—and exhibited his glory to Moses in the mount, chap. xxxiii. 18; xxxiv. 5. But the supreme Jehovah could never be the object of sense: he can neither be seen or heard.

Answer. If the supposed subordinate Jehovah is a pure spirit, he could no more be the object of the senses than the Supreme:—but if the subordinate Jehovah could manifest his presence by sensible symbols, so likewise might the Supreme.

II. The existence of two Jehovahs is expressly mentioned in some passages of Scripture, and in others it is evidently implied.

1. It is expressly mentioned, Gen. xix. 24, "Jehovah rained fire and brimstone from Jehovah out of heaven."—Hos. i. 7, "Jehovah saith, I will save them by Jehovah their God."

Answer. This is nothing more than an idiom of the Hebrew language, in which the noun is repeated for the pronoun. The same argument would prove the existence of two So-

lomons. 1 Kings viii. 1, "Then Solomon assembled the elders to king Solomon;"—and of two Rehoboams: 1 Kings xii. 21, "Rehoboam assembled the people to bring back the kingdom to Rehoboam." See also Dan. ix. 17. 1 Tim. i. 18.

Zech. ii. 9. "Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will shake my hand over thee, &c. and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me." See ver. 11.

Answer. The prophet here makes an abrupt transition from the person of Jehovah to his own: *q. d.* You shall know that I am a true prophet[2]. See Acts i. 4.

2. As a proof that where two Jehovahs are not expressed, they are sometimes plainly alluded to, appeal is made,

1.) To the word *Elohim*, which is commonly translated 'God,' which in the original is in a plural form, and is thought by some to imply a plurality of persons in the divine essence[3].

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[2] "The fulfilling of these words, saith the prophet, shall be an undeniable evidence of the truth of my mission." Mr. Lowth in loc.—This is a text upon which great stress is laid to prove the existence of two Jehovahs, one the sender, the other the sent.

[3] The word *Elohim* is commonly derived from a word which signifies *power*. But the Hutchinsonians, a sect which rose in

Answer. This is a trifling argument. In all languages it is a common anomaly for words of a plural form to have a singular signification. The word *Elohim* is almost uniformly used in apposition with singular verbs. It is not limited, like Jehovah, to express the Supreme Being alone: and though in a plural form, it commonly expresses one object only. It stands for one angel, Judges xiii. 22;—for one golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 31;—for one idol, Judges xvi. 17;—for Moses, Exod. iv. 16; vii. 1;—and for Samuel, 1 Sam. xxviii. 13.

2.) The plural number is sometimes used when God is introduced as speaking. Gen. i. 26, "God said, Let us make man in our image." Gen. xi. 7, "Let us go down and confound their language."

Answer. This is nothing more than the author's dramatic way of writing. We are not to suppose that God actually said to the waters, "Bring forth abundantly," or to the birds and

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the last century, and which was of considerable use in reviving attention to the Hebrew language, derive this word from אלה, *juravit:* they read it *Aleim*, and translate it 'the covenanters,' q. *juratores:* and they suppose an allusion to the three persons entering into covenant for the redemption of man. Such reasoning needs no refutation.

fishes, "Be fruitful and multiply." Perhaps the expression "Let there be" may denote energy;—and "Let us make" may denote forethought; and upon this occasion such language might be employed by the writer to intimate that man is the noblest work of God, the most distinguished production of divine power and wisdom in this world. Dr. Geddes says that the Jews understood these words to have been addressed to the surrounding angels: but there is no need to have recourse to this supposition.

In Eccles. xii. 1, The Received Text reads "Remember thy Creators:" and from this plural form a plurality of persons has been inferred. But Dr. Kennicott has shown that the best manuscripts have the singular number.

III. It is alleged that the word 'angel' is often used in connexion with the subordinate, but not with the Supreme Jehovah.

It is urged that Exod. xxiii. 20—23, Jehovah having promised to send an angel to keep the Israelite nation in the way, and to bring them to the promised land, adds, "Beware of him, and obey his voice, for MY NAME IS IN HIM." Here it is said that the name of Je-

hovah is expressly given to the conducting angel.

But this remark is very erroneous. An angel is properly nothing more than a messenger, and the angel here alluded to was probably Joshua, who acted in the name, that is, by the authority, of God.

Exod. xxxiii. 3. Jehovah says to Moses, "I will send an angel before thee, and I will drive out the Canaanite, &c. for I will not go up in the midst of thee, lest I consume thee by the way."—But, whatever be the meaning of this threatening, which cannot be understood in a literal sense, as though God were afraid of trusting himself with so rebellious a people, lest his indignation should unawares gain the ascendancy over his wisdom, at the intercession of Moses it was revoked. Ver. 14, "My presence shall go with thee," &c.

To assert that the angel of Jehovah is a phrase only used of the subordinate Jehovah, is assuming the very point in dispute. Any sensible symbol of the divine presence is called an angel, and this symbol is called indifferently the "angel of Jehovah," or, "Jehovah himself." See Sect. VI. p. 192.—Gen. xvi. 7, "The angel of Jehovah found her:" but ver. 13, it

appears that this angel was Jehovah himself. This fact is still more evident from Exod. iii. 2—15, "The angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush:—and when Jehovah saw—God called to him out of the midst of the bush:—I am the God of thy Fathers, the God of Abraham, &c.—Moses said, They will say to me, What is his name?—And God said to Moses, I Am that I Am. Thus shall ye say; Jehovah, the God of your Fathers, hath sent me: this is my name for ever."

What room is there here for the supposition of a Jehovah subordinate to the Supreme? The person who speaks is God himself: and it is plain that the words 'Jehovah,' 'I Am,' 'God,' 'God of your Fathers,' 'God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' are all names for one and the same divine person: also, that the phrase 'angel of Jehovah' means either the visible symbol of the divine presence, or Jehovah himself. Gen. xvii. 1; xxxi. 11, 12; xxxii. 24.; and Exod. xii. 21, which have been appealed to in support of the strange doctrine of two Jehovahs, admit of a similar explanation.

IV. The Chaldee paraphrasts of the Old Testament, Onkelos and Jonathan, are said

to acknowledge a distinction between the two Jehovahs, by giving the title 'Mimra,' *i. e. Word*, to the Jehovah-angel [1].

Gen. xxviii. 20, "Jacob vowed, If God will be with me, then shall Jehovah be my God." Onkelos renders it, If *the Word of* the Lord be with me, then shall *the Word of* the Lord be my God.—Deut. iv. 24, "Jehovah, thy God, is a consuming fire." Onkelos: Jehovah, thy God, *his Word* is, &c.

Gen. i. 27, "Jehovah created man," &c. Jonathan renders it, The *Word of* Jehovah created man.—Chap. iii. 9, "God called to Adam." In the Targum: *The Word of* God called, &c.—Chap. xviii. 1, "Jehovah, God, appeared to Abram." In the Targum; *The Word of* Jehovah appeared, &c. See Gen. iii. 22; xix. 24.

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[1] The Chaldee versions of the Old Testament are called Targums, a word which in that language signifies *a translation*. Of these Targums, the two principal are those of Onkelos, which is a close and faithful translation of the Pentateuch, written, as Dr. Prideaux thinks, near the time of Christ, and that of Jonathan, which is a paraphrastic version of the prophets of considerably later date. Another Targum on the Law, is ascribed by the Jews to the same Jonathan, who was contemporary with Gamaliel, but by internal evidence it appears to have been written some centuries afterwards, and is a work of little repute. Prideaux, Conn. vol. ii. p. 531.

Answer. This argument is evidently founded upon a palpable mistake. In the Chaldee idiom the term Mimra, 'Word,' is substituted for the reciprocal pronoun *self*; so that the 'Word of Jehovah' means nothing more than 'Jehovah himself.' Thus Numb. xv. 32, "A certain man said in *his word*," *i. e.* within himself, "I will go forth and gather sticks." 2 Sam. iii. 15, 16, "Phaltiel put a sword between *his word*," *i. e.* himself, "and Michal, the daughter of Saul." Eccl. i. 12, "Solomon said in *his word*," *i. e.* in himself, "Vanity of vanities is this whole world[5]."

Secondly: It is maintained that the Jehovah-angel animated the body of Christ.

It would be sufficient to reply, that no such being exists as the Jehovah-angel: but as the Arian hypothesis maintains that the great Angel, who was the medium of divine dispensa-

[5] Mr. Lowman, in his Three Tracts, at the end of a chapter upon this argument, observes justly, that "if the person appearing in the Shechinah was indeed only an angel personating the Most High, it should seem that the whole worship of the Jewish church for two thousand years together, was offered to an object beside and against the intention of every worshipper, beside and against the chief fundamental doctrine and rule of worship in their revelation, and against the chief principles of all religion, according to the light of nature."

tions to the Jews, is the spirit which became incarnate in Christ, it will be proper to state a few of the principal arguments.

The following texts, among others, have been alleged from the Old Testament: Isa. lxiii. 8, 9, "He was their Saviour: the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and pity he redeemed them." But this alludes to the temporal deliverances of the Jews.—Hos. i. 7, "I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God," *i. e.* I myself will deliver them.—Ezek. xxxiv. 23, "I will set up one shepherd over them, even David." Compare Zech. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my fellow, saith Jehovah," or, as Archbishop Newcome renders it, "against my friend, and against the man who is near to me."—Hos. iii. 5, "The children of Israel shall return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king." Compare Micah iv. 7, "Jehovah shall reign over them for ever." Hence it is concluded that David, *i. e.* Christ, the descendant of David, is Jehovah.

Such arguments admit of no reply. One can only wonder that learned men can impose upon

themselves by such slender and miserable sophisms.

The arguments from the New Testament are more plausible. Most of them have been stated and examined elsewhere. I shall subjoin a few which do not so properly fall under any other head.

It is alleged that the glory of Christ in the New Testament is represented in terms similar to those which express the glory of the Shechinah, or symbol of the divine presence, which rested upon the mercy-seat. 1 Thess. i. 7, "The Lord will be revealed in flaming fire." —Rev. xxi. 23, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof." Compare Deut. iv. 24; ix. 3.---But no conclusion can be drawn from the obscure and figurative language of prophecy.

Malachi iii. i. "Jehovah, whom ye seek, shall come suddenly to his temple." The prophecy, it is said, was fulfilled when Jesus visited the temple.---But this argument assumes the fact to be proved. Jesus visited the temple as the messenger of Jehovah, not as the imaginary Jehovah-angel.

Our Lord, weeping over Jerusalem, exclaims,

Luke xiii. 34, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!" This is explained of the superintendance of the Jehovah-angel.—But it may be better understood of our Lord's frequent and earnest exhortations to repentance. Or perhaps, like other prophets, Jesus may here mean to speak in the name of God. So Matt. xxiii. 24, "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men."—Deut. xxxi. 23, Moses says to Joshua, "Be of good courage, thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land that I sware unto them, and I will be with thee."

The feebleness and inconclusiveness of such arguments as these need not be insisted upon. Other texts, which are produced to prove that the Jehovah-angel animated the body of Christ, have been examined already under their proper heads[6].

The currency which the opinion, that Christ was the Jehovah-angel, and the medium of the divine dispensations to the Israelite nation, has obtained among learned and inquisitive persons, is truly surprising, considering the precarious foundation upon which it rests. "It is

[6] These texts are Matt. iii. 1—3. John i. 1—14; xii. 41. 1 Cor. x. 4, 9. Heb. i. 2. Rom. x. 13. Heb. xi. 26. 1 Pet. iii. 18—20. Heb. i. 8, 9.

the unanimous opinion of all antiquity," says Dr. Clarke, on Trin. p. 121, "that this angel who said, Exod. iii. 6, 'I am the God of thy fathers,' was Christ." But Acts iii. 13, the apostle Peter says, "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, has glorified his son Jesus:" and Jesus could not be the God whose son he was. Mr. Lindsey therefore justly remarks, Seq. p. 332, "One may not scruple to say, with the authority of St. Peter and St. Luke, that all antiquity was certainly mistaken in the opinion ascribed to them by Dr. Clarke, so far as they entertained it."

SECTION X.

THE PRESENT EXALTATION OF CHRIST, AND THE HIGH OFFICES WHICH HE NOW SUSTAINS, OR, TO WHICH HE IS TO BE APPOINTED HEREAFTER, ARE SAID TO BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE SUPPOSITION OF HIS PROPER AND SIMPLE HUMANITY.

First; CHRIST is said to be advanced to universal dominion, and is represented as at all times present to assist and protect those who submit to his authority.

I. *His Government is universal.*

1. Matt. xxviii. 18. "All power," εξεσια, dominion, or authority, "is given to me in heaven and upon earth." This doctrine is variously explained.

1.) The Trinitarians say, that universal dominion is given to the Son in his mediatorial capacity, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings [1].

[1] "Meminerimus vero, quod Christus jure suo semper apud Patrem habuit hoc, illi in carne nostra datum esse, vel, ut clarius

2.) The Arians maintain that Christ, the Logos, is reinstated in the government of the universe, or, of this system, or world, or of angels and men, and is appointed to be head and governor of the church. But if the Logos was from the beginning the Maker and Lord of all things, it is difficult to conceive how a mere restoration to honours which he originally possessed, and voluntarily relinquished for a time, can with propriety be represented as the reward of his mediatorial undertaking[2].

3.) Some say that Christ, who, previously to his incarnation, had been only the tutelar angel of Judea, is now advanced to a dominion over other guardian angels, who were before of equal rank with himself, and is appointed governor of the world and of the church[3].

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loquar, in persona mediatoris." Calvin in loc.—So that it appears after all, that nothing was given to Christ which he did not already possess. See also Beza, Whitby, and Guyse in loc.

[2] Clarke on Trin. p. 268. "Our Lord's dominion is indeed vastly extensive, even coextended with the rational creation: But as it is derived, it is neither universal nor supreme, as the Father's is." Dr. D. Scott on the Trin. p. 107.

[3] This singular and extravagant hypothesis is supported by Mr. Peirce on Heb. i. 9; also by Mr. Henry Taylor in Ben. Mord. Lett. ii. p. 303.

4.) The Polish Socinians held that Jesus, though a mere human being, as a reward for his transcendant merit, and his obedience to death, is exalted to the throne of universal government, is made the ruler of angels and archangels, and is become the proper object of religious homage[4].

5.) This text is understood by many to

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[4] "Per mortem et resurrectionem suam, omnem potestatem in cœlo et in terra, *i. e.* illimitatum regnum atque imperium super omnes creaturas in cœlo et in terra existentes....quapropter etiam ipsi, summo jure debetur cultus non modo adorationis, sed etiam invocationis in rebus omnibus, quæ ad nostrum sive temporale sive sempiternum bonum spectant. Wolzogenius.—Christus ad dextram Dei in cœlis collocatus, etiam ab angelis adorandus est..... Omnem in cœlo et in terra potestatem accepit; et omnia, Deo solo excepto, ejus pedibus sunt subjecta." Catach. Eccles. Polon. sect. iv.—Well may Dr. Price say, (Serm. p. 146,) that "there is nothing in Athanasianism itself more extravagant than this doctrine of Socinus and his followers," and that "it not only renders the Scriptures unintelligible, but Christianity itself incredible. Consider whether such an elevation of a mere man is credible, or even possible? Can it be believed that a mere man could be advanced at once so high as to be above angels, and to be qualified to rule and judge this world? Does not this contradict all we see or can conceive of the order of God's works? Do not all beings rise gradually, one acquisition laying the foundation of another, and preparing for higher acquisitions? What would you think were you told, that a child just born, instead of growing like all other human creatures, had started at once to complete manhood, and the government of an empire? This is nothing to the fact I am considering."

express some unknown personal dignity and authority to which our Lord is now advanced, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings, and by which he was enabled in the primitive age to communicate the holy spirit to the first teachers of Christianity, and to protect, assist, and direct them in their labours: and by which he is at all times operating effectually for the benefit of the church, though in an unknown and imperceptible manner[5].

6.) Mr. Locke, in his note upon Eph. i. 10, shows that in the writings of Paul the words "heaven and earth" stand for "Jew and Gentile." And if this sense be admitted in the present case, the meaning of our Lord's declaration will be, *q. d.* all authority is given me over Jews and Gentiles: that is, All men, without distinction, will be invited to become the subjects, and to participate in the privileges, of my kingdom. And this interpretation derives probability from the exhortation which immediately succeeds: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."

It is a question among learned Unitarians of

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[5] See Grot. in loc. This appears to have been the opinion of Dr. Priestley and other modern Unitarians.

the present day, whether the reign of Christ upon earth is real and personal, or symbolical and figurative. Dr. Priestley, though he first defended the figurative hypothesis, became in his later publications a decided advocate for the personal dominion of Christ. He thought that the kingdom of Christ would not commence till the period of the Millennium, and that he would then appear in the clouds, to raise martyrs and confessors from the dead, to restore the Jews to their own country, and to govern the world for a thousand prophetic years of peace and prosperity, virtue and happiness[6].

On the other hand, Mr. Lindsey and many others with him, conceive that those expres-

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[6] See Dr. Priestley's hypothesis stated and defended in his Notes upon Rev. xx. He apprehended this period of Christ's second coming to be very near. In the spring of 1794, a few days before he set sail for America, he said to a friend, that in his judgement this great event could not be more remote than twenty years. And it was his firm conviction, that this period of Christ's personal dominion will be of very long duration. He even conjectures that every prophetic day of the Millennium represents a natural year. He conceived that Christ is at all times actively employed for the benefit of mankind, but that he does not enter upon his kingdom till the Millennium arrives. Mr. Evanson also advances a similar hypothesis in his Reflections on Religion in Christendom, p. 39, and p. 147, 148.

sions which appear to attribute to Christ personal dignity and authority, are wholly figurative. They plead that the kingdom of Christ is uniformly opposed to that of Satan. But it is conceived that in this connexion Satan is a symbolical and not a real person, and that his government expresses not the rule of a powerful evil spirit, but the prevalence of idolatry, superstition, and vice. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the dominion of Christ is to be understood in the same figurative sense: that it expresses not the personal authority of our divine Master, but the prevalence of his religion in the world, the empire of truth, and virtue, and happiness, which is continually extending its beneficial influence in proportion to the progress of christian principles, and which we have every reason to believe will in due time become universal and perpetual. And though it is pleaded by the advocates for the personal dominion of Christ, that Jesus, being a man, like other men, was capable of being influenced by personal considerations, and that it is refining too much to suppose that he was altogether free from every bias of this nature; it seems, nevertheless, to be more consistent with the acknowledged piety, humility, and

disinterested benevolence of our Lord's character, to conceive of him as acting under the influence of these generous principles and comprehensive views, rather than from the comparatively low and interested expectation of personal recompense[7].

2. John xviii. 33. "Pilate said, Art thou the king of the Jews?"—Ver. 36, "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world."—Ver. 37, "Pilate said, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am—a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

3. 1 Cor. xv. 24—27. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy shall be destroyed, *even* death."

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[7] "Agreeably to the prejudices and imaginations of Jews and Gentiles, the subjection of all mankind to the rules of piety and virtue, delivered by Christ, is shadowed out under the imagery of a mighty king, to whom all power was given in heaven and earth," &c. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 473.

In this passage Death, a symbolical person, is placed in the list of those enemies of Christ who are hereafter to be destroyed: it is probable therefore that the other enemies here alluded to are symbolical persons likewise: and thus the whole paragraph is a figurative description of the ultimate triumph of the Gospel over all opposition, and of the final extermination of idolatry and superstition, of ignorance, and vice, and misery.

4. Eph. i. 20—23. See p. 204.

5. Philip. ii. 9—11. " —Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Compare Col. i. 17, 18; ii. 10. In the epistles to the seven churches, in the Apocalypse, chap. ii. iii., Jesus assumes a sovereign authority. And chap. xix. contains a symbolical representation of the final triumph of the Gospel, and of the judgements of God upon its enemies and persecutors.

II. *Christ is represented as personally present for the Aid and Protection of those who submit to his Authority.*

1. Matt. xxviii. 20. "And, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world," ἑως της συντελειας τυ αιωνος, 'to the conclusion of this age.'

Grotius, Whitby, Doddridge, and the Polish Socinians, also Dr. Priestley and many others, understand this text as a promise that Jesus will be personally present with his disciples, acting for their benefit to the end of time. And Dr. Whitby contends that this is the only sense in which the evangelist uses the phrase wherever it occurs in his writings[8].

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[8] The places in which these words occur in the Gospel of Matthew are, chap. xiii. 39, 40, "The harvest is the *end of the world,* or *age,* and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, so shall it be *in the end of this world,* or *age.*"—Ver. 49, "They gathered the good (fish) into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the *end of the world,* or *age.*"—Chap. xxiv. 3, "What will be the sign of thy coming, and of the *end of this world,* or *age?*" Here the phrase unquestionably means the Jewish dispensation, or rather polity. For, in reply to the question proposed by his disciples, our Lord immediately proceeds to foretel the calamities which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem. And ver. 34, he declares, "This generation shall not pass till all these things are

Dr. Whitby was certainly mistaken in this assertion, as appears from the note below. It may nevertheless be conceded that our Lord is, or may be, personally present in this world, and actively engaged at all times in some unknown manner for the benefit of his church. But it does not follow that this is the meaning of the promise in Matthew; much less can it be concluded that Christ in his present state, however exalted and glorious, is invested with those divine attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, which are usually ascribed to

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fulfilled." This phrase, which, as Mr. Wakefield observes in his note upon Matt. xiii. 39, "is an idiom of the Hebrew language," occurs but once more in the New Testament. Heb. ix. 26, "but now, once, in the end of the world, επι συντελεια των αιωνων, 'at the completion or conclusion of the ages,' hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."—"But let me ask," says Mr. Wakefield, ibid. "when did Christ appear, but towards the end of the Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical? They therefore, who interpret this phrase by 'the end of the world,' or 'the consummation of all things,' do so without any authority, and in direct opposition to the idiom of the Hebrew language, and the sense of a plain text of Scripture."—That excellent and judicious commentator Bishop Pearce, and after him Mr. Wakefield, interpret the parables of the tares and of the fish, chap. xiii., of the events which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, when the christians, warned by divine admonition, retired from Judea before the desolation of the country by the Romans. See Pearce's Comment. in loc.

him. The truth is, that the Scriptures have left us totally in the dark with regard to the present condition, employment, and attributes of Christ, and therefore it is in vain to speculate upon the subject.

The interpretation which is given to this text in Matthew, by Bishop Pearce, Mr. Wakefield, Mr. Lindsey, and others, *viz.* "I am with you alway, to the conclusion of this age," is that which by Unitarians is generally and justly preferred.

Our Lord says "I am with *you*," that is, as Mr. Lindsey observes, Seq. p. 75, "with *you* who are now present with me,—*you* may be assured of extraordinary assistance and support. But he does not promise the same to succeeding christians: the miraculous aid and gifts of which he obviously speaks, were confined to the age of the apostles."

Mr. Lindsey thinks that "this limitation, which our Lord himself prescribes, throws great light upon many passages of Scripture."—1. "It may account for our Lord's appearing to his apostles and to Stephen after his ascension. Acts vii. 55; ix. 4."—2. "It affords a satisfactory reason why Christ has never visibly manifested himself since the apostolic age.

Whatever agency of Christ there may be now in the affairs of his church, it is wholly unknown to us."—3. "This limitation of the extraordinary powers exercised by Christ, and imparted to his apostles, and confinement of them to the first ages of the church, will be a clue to lead us to the meaning of many passages in the New Testament, and will help us to avoid those many errors which men have fallen into, by applying to the case of christians in general such things as related only to the apostles, and to the miraculous gifts conferred on them."

These remarks appear to be highly judicious and important, and are capable of very extensive application.

2. John xiv. 13, 14. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name[9], that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." See chap. xv. 23.

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[9] This is not to be understood as a direction to all christians to conclude all their prayers with the name of Christ, as though there was any particular charm in those words to make their prayers available. The fact seems to be, that our Lord himself possessed a voluntary power of working miracles, but the apostles only an occasional power, when prompted by some in

This discourse is addressed to the apostles only, and the promise is limited to them. The meaning is, that whatever in the course of their ministry they requested in the name, that is, with a view to promote the doctrine and kingdom, of Christ, if the request was proper [10], it should be granted. And upon the whole it is promised, that they should be amply qualified by him for the discharge of the apostolic office.

3. Rom. viii. 34. " —who also maketh intercession," εντυγχανει, interferes, " for us [11]."

This expression is applied to Christ only in

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ward suggestion. And the language used upon such occasions generally corresponds with this supposition. Christ " rebukes the disorder :"—he says to the leper, " I will, be thou clean ;" and to the dead, " I say unto thee, Arise." The language of the apostles is in a humbler strain. " In the name of Jesus Christ," saith Peter to the lame man, " rise up and walk :—Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Thus acknowledging themselves the servants of Christ, and that they performed miracles by power derived from him, and exercised in subservience to his cause.

[10] That this limitation was always to be understood is evident both from the reason of the thing, and from the fact that Paul, who " was not behind the very chief of the apostles," besought the Lord thrice to have his complaint, the thorn in the flesh, removed, but without success. 2 Cor. xii.

[11] " εντυγχανειν ὑπερ τινος, pro commodo alicujus facere aliquid." Schleusner.—It is a word of very general import, and is used to express any kind of interference on account of another. Mr. Lindsey thinks that " the perpetual intercession of Christ

this passage and in Heb. vii. 25, and probably means that Christ in his exalted state is employing his powers in some unknown manner for the benefit of the church.

4. Philip. iv. 13. "I can do all things through *Christ*, who strengtheneth me."

The word 'Christ' is omitted in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and in some ancient versions. Admitting it to be genuine, it may allude to the promise of Christ to be present with his apostles, and may express the apostle's confidence, that he who had invested him with the apostolic office would qualify him for it, and support him in the faithful discharge of it.

5. Heb. ii. 18. "For in that he himself suffered, being tempted, he knows how to succour those who are tempted."

q. d. Having himself been a great sufferer, he knows how to sympathize with those who are afflicted; and in the great discoveries, and the rich and precious promises of the Gospel, he has made ample provision for their support and consolation.

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may be the continual operation and effect of his mission and doctrine in the world." Seq. p. 88, note. See Impr. Vers. in loc.

Under this head it may be remarked that Christ sometimes authoritatively pronounces the forgiveness of sins: from which his enemies, who were his contemporaries, and many christians in modern times, have erroneously inferred that our Lord arrogates to himself divine attributes. Matt. ix. 2, "He said to the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven thee." Hearing this, the scribes said within themselves, "Why doth he thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" See Mark ii. 7.[12] In this passage there is probably an allusion to an opinion known to have prevailed among the Jews, that every sin was visited with a specific punishment, and that bodily diseases, accidents, and the like, were punishments inflicted for particular crimes. Job's friends, from his misery infer his guilt: and the Pharisees assume that a man was born blind, either as a punishment for sins which he had committed in an antecedent state, or for the sins of his parents. John ix. 2. See also

[12] "Their principle indeed was right, but their application was evidently wrong.—Almighty Saviour, may we each of us receive from thee forgiveness of our sins!" Doddridge in loc. But our Lord's reasoning was very different from that of the learned expositor.

Luke xiii. 1—5. Our Lord upon every occasion peremptorily denies their principle: but in the case of the paralytic, he silences the cavils of the Jews, and supports his divine authority by healing the disease. Mark ii. 10, 11.—In the same sense he confers upon his apostles authority to forgive sins, *i. e.* to heal diseases, and to remove, and in some cases to inflict, calamities. John xx. 23, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Compare Matt. xviii. 18.[13]

In Luke vii. 48, our Lord pronounces, concerning the woman who washed and perfumed his feet, "Thy sins are forgiven," "thy faith hath saved thee." This woman was probably a Gentile: and, as it is said "her sins were many," it is probable that she had been remarkably addicted to idolatrous superstitions; but that by our Lord's preaching and miracles she had been convinced of his divine mission, and converted to the worship of the true

[13] Upon this principle, that sin and disease are, according to the theory of the Jews, almost reciprocal terms, the text 1 John v. 16, may perhaps admit the easiest explanation: 'The sin not unto death' may mean a curable disorder, for recovery from which it may not be unreasonable to pray. 'The sin unto death' may be an incurable malady; in which case prayer for recovery would be useless and improper. Compare James v. 14, 15.

God. By this symbolical action she declared her conversion, which our Lord graciously accepted; and by his kind address to her he publicly testified that she was now translated from the community of sinners, *i. e.* heathen idolaters, into the community of saints or holy ones, *i. e.* the true worshipers of God: her faith in him had obtained this privilege for her. There is no reason to believe, that, antecedently to her conversion, she had been immoral in her conduct: nor is it to be supposed that a woman of infamous character would have been admitted into our Lord's presence, or even into the Pharisee's house. It is well known to all who have attended to Scripture phraseology, that the word *sinner* often signifies nothing more than heathen; and *saint* expresses only a professed worshiper of the true God: and that a conversion from heathenism, and admission into the community of true worshipers, is sometimes expressed by the terms 'repentance, and forgiveness of sins[14],' and that without any immediate regard to personal character. The

[14] See this fact established by Mr. Locke, in his Commentary on Rom. v. 8, note (q); and in Dr. Taylor's Key to the Apostolic Writings, chap. vi. vii.

Gospel dispensation is represented in the New Testament, and particularly by the apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, as a scheme for obtaining remission of sins both for Jews and Gentiles; that is, for recovering them from error and superstition, to the knowledge and worship of the true God. Thus the apostle Peter speaks of Christ as exalted to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. Acts v. 31.—It cannot be doubted that the Gospel teaches the free forgiveness of moral offences to the sincere penitent: but this could not with propriety be represented as the distinguishing peculiarity of the Christian dispensation, because the promises of forgiveness in the Old Testament are as numerous, as clear, as full, and as decisive, as any that are to be found in the New. See Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Psalm li. 17. Isaiah lv. 7. Micah vii. 18.

III. *Jesus Christ is appointed to raise the Dead.*

1. John v. 28, 29. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and

they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

2. John vi. 40. "I will raise him up at the last day."

3. John xi. 25. "I am the resurrection and the life."

4. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

"The apostle in these words," says Mr. Tyrwhitt, "suggests a remarkable analogy between the two dispensations of death and life, with respect to the nature of the persons by whom they were introduced.—The foundation of which analogy seems to be no other than this; that Christ, as to his nature, was in no respect materially different from Adam; that he was a man in the same sense of the word in which it was applied by St. Paul to Adam, and in which it is commonly applied to all the sons of Adam. We may reasonably presume that the apostle, in speaking of Adam and Christ, with respect to their natures, if he had known of any material distinction between them, would have been no less attentive to the circumstances of opposition than to those of resemblance. That instead of saying, 'As by man came death, by

man came also the resurrection of the dead,' he would have said, '*Although* by man came death, the resurrection of the dead came by a person of a nature far superior to that of man [15].'"

5. Philip. iii. 20, 21. "—the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

6. 1 Thess. iv. 16. "For the Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

7. 2 Cor. iv. 14. "Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." See also John v. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 14—26. Rev. i. 17, 18. Rom. xiv. 9.

Dr. Price observes, Serm. p. 147, that the power which the Scriptures teach us that Christ possesses, of raising to life all who have died, and all who will die, is equivalent to the power of creating a world. How inconsistent is it to

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[15] See Mr. Tyrwhitt's admirable Dissertation on this text, in Commentaries and Essays, vol. ii. p. 15.

allow to him one of those powers, and at the same time to question whether he could have possessed the other!

Dr. Priestley replies, Letters, p. 142, that Dr. Price acknowledges that the power by which Christ raised the dead when he was on earth "was not properly his own, but that of his Father, who was in him, or acted by him." It may also be added, that the Scriptures teach that Christ is to raise the dead, but not that he made the world.

IV. *Jesus Christ is appointed to the Office of universal Judge, and to dispense the Rewards and Punishments of a future Life: an Office to which, as many think, it is incredible that a mere human Being should be advanced.*

The passages which are usually understood to assert this doctrine are very numerous, and many of them are perhaps principally applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem. I shall produce some which appear to be most decisive, and refer to the rest. The fact itself is not disputed, that the Scriptures, taken in a literal sense, teach that Christ is to judge the world. The difficulty to be considered is, whether his elevation to this office can be reconciled to the doctrine of his simple and proper humanity.

1. Matt. xxv. 31, to the end. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," &c.

This passage, in connexion with the preceding discourse, is interpreted by some as a scenical representation of the calamities which were shortly to overtake the Jewish nation, and of the escape of the Christians from the general desolation[16]. But it is commonly understood as a figurative description of the final appearance of Christ to judge the world. Other texts to the same purpose in this evangelist are, Chap. vii. 22; xiii. 40, 41; xvi. 27; xxvi. 64. See also Mark xiii. 26; xiv. 62. Luke xxii. 70.

2. Luke ix. 26. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." Matt. x. 33. Luke xii. 8; xxi. 36. Also Luke iii. 16, 17.

3. John v. 26, 27. "For as the Father

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[16] See Bishop Pearce's Comm. in loc. and Nisbett on the Coming of the Messiah, p. 140.

hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this:" &c.

" Because," says Archbishop Newcome, " he hath assumed human nature." But the text gives no countenance to this gloss. The words are ' because he is,' not ' because he chose to be, the Son of Man.'

A few manuscripts of no great account, the Syriac and Armenian versions, and some of the Fathers, join the last clause of the 27th verse to the beginning of the 28th. *q. d.* " Marvel not at this, that he is the Son of Man." And Theophylact accuses Paul of Samosata of introducing this punctuation in order to countenance his Unitarian opinions. But the charge is unproved, and the motive improbable. The best authorities favour the received punctuation: and the text implies that there is a peculiar propriety in delegating this office to a human being. Compare John v. 22.

Grotius supposes an allusion to Daniel vii. 13, 14, and interprets the text of the advent of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem.

4. Acts i. 11. " —This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come

in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

This declaration is thought to assert in the most explicit language the visible personal return of Christ. See Dr. Priestley's Not. in loc.

5. Acts xvii. 31. "Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that MAN whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

6. Acts x. 40, 42. "Peter said to Cornelius, Him God raised up, and showed him openly;—and he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was ordained by God to be the judge of the living and the dead."

7. Rom. ii. 16. "—in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." Compare chap. xiv. 10.

8. 1 Cor. i. 8. "—that ye may be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus." See chap. v. 5. 2 Cor. i. 14.

9. 2 Cor. v. 10. "For we must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the

body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

10. 1 Thess. ii. 19. "For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" Comp. chap. iv. 16.

11. 2 Thess. i. 6—10. "—when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God,—who shall be punished with everlasting destruction—when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

12. 2 Tim. iv. 1. "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearance, and his kingdom."

13. 1 Pet. i. 7. "—that the trial of your faith may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." See chap. v. 4.

14. Rev. i. 7. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him," &c.

15. Rev. ii. 7. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life."

—See ver. 10. 17; chap. iii. 5. 12. 21; chap. xxii. 12, 13.

From these declarations it is concluded that Jesus is appointed to appear in person to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to award to every individual of the human race his final sentence of reward or punishment. This is an office of such transcendant dignity and importance, and requires powers so far superior to any thing which we can conceive to belong to a mere human being, however meritorious and exalted, that to many it appears utterly incredible that such an office should be assigned to one who was himself at one time a peccable and fallible man, and, as such, liable to appear at the tribunal of eternal justice. The righteous judge of the whole earth, the unerring arbiter of the destinies of all the innumerable generations of mankind, must surely be himself a personage of rank far superior to any who shall then be summoned to his tribunal. This argument has appeared so forcible to some persons of much learning and reflection, that this consideration alone has prevented them from acceding to the Unitarian hypothesis, though they have acknowledged

that particular texts might admit of a satisfactory explication upon Unitarian principles.—That this is a great difficulty cannot be denied; but possibly it may be alleviated by attention to the following considerations:

1. The Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ is appointed to judge the world. The same Scriptures, in connexion with this very appointment, expressly represent Jesus as a MAN delegated to this high office: Acts xvii. 31. Whatever, therefore, our prejudices may suggest to the contrary, it is in fact not inconsistent with divine wisdom, nor with the reason and order of things, that a human being should be appointed to the office of universal judge. It is even implied, John v. 27, that the proper humanity of Christ is an essential qualification for the office. And it is certain that wherever Jesus is mentioned under the character of a judge, he is never in that connexion represented as a being of an order different from, and superior to, mankind. Nor is this qualification ever hinted at as necessary for executing this solemn office.

2. Jesus and his apostles do not appear to have felt any difficulty in the appointment of a human being to the office of universal judge. They simply state the fact in the

clearest and most unequivocal manner, that God will judge the world by the MAN whom he hath ordained. They give no explanation, they make no comment, they obviate no objections. This is a strong presumption that, according to their ideas, the office required no qualifications which a man appointed and assisted by God might not possess.

3. If to judge the world be an office which Jesus is to execute in person, and if it requires powers and qualifications superior to those which he possessed on earth, these may be attained either by the regular and progressive improvement of his powers, in the long interval between his ascension and the day of judgement [17], or they may be imparted to him for the occasion by God himself, whose organ and delegate he will be on that grand occasion; and who could as easily qualify a man, as an angel, or a logos, for this important purpose.

4. Whatever may be intended by the

[17] "Christ is also said to judge the world. But whatever may be requisite to his doing this may be as easily imparted by God, as the power of raising the dead. Though when you say that his qualifications for discharging this office were acquired *suddenly*, you overlook the long interval between his ascension and his second coming, in which you cannot suppose that he is doing and learning nothing." Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, p. 140.

expression 'judging the world,' the apostles of Christ, and believers in general, are to share in that honour and office with their Master.—Matt. xix. 28, "When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."—1 Cor. vi. 2, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"—Ver. 3, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" It is indeed alleged that christians are said to judge the world only in a figurative and improper sense; but that this office is attributed to Christ really, properly, and without a figure. But this distinction is quite gratuitous and unauthorized. For any thing that appears to the contrary, the apostles and other christians will be constituted judges of the world in the very same sense with Christ, though probably in an inferior degree. For he, in this, as in all other things, must have the pre-eminence [18].

5. The sense in which a prophecy is fulfilled is often very different from that which

[18] "Judging the world is no proof of a nature superior to man. Our Saviour says, John v. 27, 'and has given him authority to execute judgement, because he is the Son of Man.' Not so, the Arian will say; but because he was the Son of God, and was before all worlds. But this is being wise above what is written." Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, p. 140

the literal interpretation would lead us to expect. It is therefore highly probable that the mode in which Christ will eventually execute the office of judging the world, will bear little or no resemblance to that which the expressions naturally suggest: and in their true sense they may mean nothing more than what a human being, exalted and endowed as Jesus is, may be qualified to perform. God declares to the prophet Jeremiah, chap. i. 10, "See, I have set thee this day over all nations, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant;" when nothing more was intended than to authorize the prophet to declare the divine purpose. And the promise to Peter, Matt. xvi. 19, that whatsoever he bound or loosed on earth, should be bound or loosed in heaven, is usually understood in a similar sense. The prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem is expressed in language as strong, and in figures as awful, as those which relate to the last judgement; and the personal appearance of Christ himself, with his angels, is as expressly asserted; see Matt. xxiv. 29. Luke xxi. 25, &c.: yet, for any thing that appears, these calamitous events were brought to pass by natural means, and probably without any personal, certainly

without any visible, interference of Christ. He was only so far concerned in it, as, in the symbolical language of prophecy, to declare authoritatively that the event would happen.

6. May we not then be permitted to conjecture, that when Christ is represented as appointed by God to judge the world, nothing more may be intended by this language, but that the final states of all and every individual of mankind shall be awarded agreeably to the declarations of the Gospel? This supposition is perfectly analogous to those cases which are cited under the preceding head, especially to the strong expressions which are used concerning our Lord's advent for the destruction of Jerusalem; the accomplishment of which in a figurative, and not a literal sense, seems intended to direct our minds to the interpretation of those symbols which typify, and of that language which announces, the personal agency of Christ and his disciples in the awful solemnities of the final judgement. This explanation affords a very easy solution of the language of Paul concerning the saints judging the world. The apostles and christians in general may fitly be represented as assessors with Christ on the tribunal of judgement, as by the very profession

of christianity they bear their solemn testimony, to the unbelieving world, of the divine declaration by Jesus Christ, that there is a life to come, in which men shall be rewarded according to their works.

In perfect analogy to this interpretation, Christ is figuratively represented as a lawgiver, because the precepts of his Gospel are laws to govern the conduct of his disciples:—he is figuratively a priest, because he voluntarily delivered himself up as a victim; and sacrificed his life in the cause of truth, and in obedience to the will of God.—He is figuratively a conqueror and a king, and universal dominion is ascribed to him, because his Gospel and religion will gradually prevail through the world, and all nations will eventually submit to its authority.—In like manner, Christ is figuratively a judge, because the final states of all mankind will be awarded in a future life agreeably to the solemn, repeated, and explicit declarations of his Gospel.

Our Lord himself appears to give some countenance to this interpretation, by the language which he uses, John xii. 47, 48, "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to

save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN, THE SAME SHALL JUDGE HIM AT THE LAST DAY."

It is a consideration of some weight, that this interpretation relieves the doctrine of the proper humanity of Jesus Christ from that great difficulty which has been stated above, *viz.* that a mere man should be appointed to judge the characters, and to assign the final states of all the human race ; and obviates an objection which, to some inquisitive and reflecting minds, has appeared insurmountable [19].

It is obvious that the same arguments will apply to the personal agency of Christ in the resurrection of the dead, though the difficulty in this case may not perhaps be quite so great as in the other. And if any should object that

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[19] In this light it has been said that this objection appeared to the late reverend and learned Hugh Farmer of Walthamstow, who thought that difficulties from particular texts might be overcome. To the writer of this note this eminent divine, whose name would do credit to any cause, distinctly acknowledged that Tertullian's celebrated testimony to the unitarianism of the primitive christians, upon which great stress is justly laid by Dr. Priestley in his controversy with Bishop Horsley, had never been answered.

such a latitude of interpretation would make the plainest language unintelligible, let the objector consider, that no language is less intelligible than that of unfulfilled prophecy, which may nevertheless be made perfectly intelligible by the event. The personal agency of Jesus in the general resurrection of mankind is not more distinctly asserted, than his visible and immediate agency in the dissolution of the Jewish polity. But as the event proves in the latter case, that nothing more was intended than a solemn and authoritative prediction of the catastrophe, it is not impossible that it may be equally so in the former. And it is a fact certainly known, and universally admitted, that in the language of prophecy the prophet is often said to do that which he is inspired to foretel. See Hos. vi. 5. Rev. xi. 6.[20]

[20] See Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, No. IX.

SECTION XI.

CONCERNING THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST.

RELIGIOUS Worship is homage, mental or verbal, addressed to an invisible being, who is supposed to be capable of attending to such addresses, and to possess a voluntary power of doing good or evil to the worshiper.

Idolatry, strictly speaking, is the worship of an image, or of a being of whom an image is the symbol. In a more general sense, it is addressing religious worship to a being who is not authorized to receive it. Hence it follows that religious worship which in the estimation of one person is an indispensable duty, is by another regarded as idolatrous. The worship of the Virgin Mary and other saints, as they are called, in the Roman church, is by Protestants deemed idolatry. And upon the same principle, the worship of Christ by Trinitarians, Arians, and Socinians, is idolatrous in the judgement of Unitarians, who conceive of God

alone as the proper object of religious worship. A conclusion which Trinitarians readily allow, if the Unitarian doctrine is true: and from which indeed some deduce an argument for the proper deity of Christ, as they think it incredible that the great body of christians should have been suffered for so many centuries to apostatize into idolatry. But not to insist upon the language of prophecy, which foretells this great apostasy, they who use this argument forget that the same reasoning would also establish transubstantiation itself. Unitarians, though they regard the worship of Christ as idolatrous and unscriptural, and productive of many hurtful consequences; and though, on this account, they think it their duty to enter their public protest against it, are very far from presuming to criminate their fellow-christians who fall into this great and common error. It is not for them to judge of the means and opportunities of information which their mistaken brethren may possess, or of the motives by which they may be influenced. Nor do they pretend that the worship of Christ was ever alluded to in the cautions and warnings of the first teachers of christianity, nor do they believe that this species of idolatry was ever in the contemplation of

the sacred writers. The idolatry which they continually and justly held up to infamy and abhorrence, was heathen idolatry, which was not only in the highest degree absurd in the theory, but which countenanced and even required the practice of the most odious and degrading vices.

The old Socinian doctrine, that Christ, after his ascension, was advanced to the government of the universe, and became the proper object of a secondary religious worship, is now universally exploded. Even the modern Arians, who, like Dr. Price, acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Maker and Governor of the world, and to be the Lord *their* Maker, have, however inconsistently with their principles, and with the examples of their predecessors, generally abandoned the worship of Christ. And upon this ground they lay claim to the honourable distinction of Unitarians. But as they continue to ascribe divine attributes and works to Christ, though they deny him divine honours, this claim is partly allowed by the stricter Unitarians. At any rate, these Arians cannot avail themselves of the argument which many derive from the supposed authorized worship of Christ to prove his pre-existence and superior

dignity; but are equally concerned with the proper Unitarians, to explain the passages alleged for this purpose in consistence with pure Unitarian principles.

It is proposed to state the principal texts in which the worship of Christ is said to be either taught or exemplified in the New Testament, from which it will be easy to collect how far they admit of being reconciled to the doctrine of his proper humanity.

Religious worship is either mental or external.

I. Mental.—*Christ is said to be represented as the Object of Religious Regard.*

1. Of Faith.

1. Rom. x. 9. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe with thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

q. d. If thou shalt sincerely believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and shalt profess thy faith in him as the true Messiah, thou shalt be entitled to the blessings of the Gospel. See Locke in loc.

2. 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

q. d. Every one who believes Jesus to be the true Messiah, becomes by his profession a member of the christian church, and is adopted into the family of God.—See also John iii. 36. Acts xvi. 30, 31; xxvi. 18. Gal. iii. 26. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

It would be endless and useless to cite all the passages which require faith in Christ. It is obvious from the texts above cited, that Faith has no mystical meaning annexed to it, as some have imagined. Faith in Christ is either speculative or practical. Speculative faith is, as the apostle defines it above, assent to the proposition that Jesus is the Christ, and that he rose from the dead. This constitutes a person a christian, and entitles him to the external privileges of the Gospel. In the language of the New Testament, he is 'regenerated,' 'called,' 'forgiven,' 'justified,' 'adopted,' 'sanctified,' and 'saved:' he is 'a son and heir,' he is 'chosen and holy:' that is, he is separated from the unbelieving and idolatrous world, he is translated out of the 'kingdom of darkness' and of 'Satan' into the 'kingdom of 'light' and of 'God's dear Son.' He is admitted into the new covenant, and stands in the same relation to God as the

descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob formerly did.

Practical Faith is acting up to the conviction of the understanding; and this is indispensably necessary to the future reward. He that heareth the sayings of Christ, and doeth them, is the wise man who buildeth his house upon a rock.

2. Christ is the Object of Love.

1. John xiv. 21. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."

2. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha."

q. d. Let him be excluded from the christian community. "The Lord is coming," who will animadvert upon him as he deserves. The apostle alludes to the solemn form of excommunication among the Jews, after they had been deprived by the Romans of the power of inflicting capital punishments. They thus expressed their firm expectation, that God would interpose in some way or other to carry into

effect the sentence which they were not permitted to execute.

3. 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom, having not seen, ye love." See also Matt. x. 37. John xvi. 27; xxi. 15, 16, 17. Eph. vi. 24.

Our Lord has so explicitly and repeatedly declared, that all the love which he requires of his disciples is, to obey the precepts of his Gospel, that it seems surprising that personal affection to Christ should be so often represented and insisted upon as a christian duty of the highest importance. The apostles and other immediate followers of Christ, who knew him personally, and had derived personal benefits from him, in addition to the greatest veneration for his character, could not but feel the most affectionate attachment to his person. But it is impossible that christians of later times, who have had no personal intercourse with Christ, and who have received no personal benefits from him, can love him in the same sense in which the apostles and his other companions did. They may indeed figure to their imaginations an ideal person; they may ascribe to this person the most amiable attributes; they may fancy that they are under greater obligations to him than to the Father himself; in the warmth of their imagina-

tions, they may conceive of themselves as holding converse with him, and their affections may be drawn out to this ideal benefactor to a very great extent; their faith and hope, and love and joy, may swell even to ecstasy;—but this is not love to Christ: it is nothing but a fond and groundless affection to a mere phantom of the imagination. Our Lord's declaration remains unaltered: "HE THAT HATH MY COMMANDMENTS, AND KEEPETH THEM, HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME." This doctrine must necessarily appear very cold and spiritless to those who delight in high flights of fancy and of feeling in the concerns of religion. They may perhaps represent it as the very *frigid zone* of christianity. But it is the christianity which their Master taught, and from which they who are content to learn of him only, will not feel themselves authorized to depart.

It is indeed impossible for any person of reflection and sensibility to read the interesting account of Christ in the artless narrative of the evangelists, without being deeply impressed with the wisdom and majesty of his doctrine, and with the simplicity and purity, the humility, the meekness and fortitude, the habitual unaffected piety, the enlarged active benevolence,

and the mild but conscious dignity of his exalted character. But this is no more than an unbeliever might experience, and what many have expressed: and cannot with any propriety be called Love to Christ, in the sense in which that phrase is commonly understood. Also, no one can truly appreciate the blessings of the Gospel, without great thankfulness to God for the gift of his Son to be the saviour of the world. Any thing beyond this appears to be incomprehensible, irrational, and unscriptural. That our Lord himself did not challenge personal affection as a christian duty, is further evident from his declaration, Mark iii. 35, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, or sister, or mother." *q. d.* The man who performs his duty to God, is he who bears the truest affection to me. And though, while on earth, our Lord cultivated personal friendships, and the apostles must all have felt the most ardent personal affection to their revered Master; and Paul in particular, having been under peculiar obligations to Christ, often labours for words to express the warmth of his attachment; yet even this apostle explicitly renounces the personal friendship of Christ himself; if it should prove,

which he states as possible, an impediment to him in the exercise of his ministry: 2 Cor. v. 16, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now, henceforth, know we him no more." *q. d.* If I had been the intimate friend of Christ, and in the habit of daily personal intercourse with him, I must forego all the delight and advantage of his society, in order to fulfill the purposes of the mission to which I am appointed; namely, to live to him who died for him and rose again: that is, to promote the great cause for which Jesus lived and died.

3. The Care of the Soul to be committed to Christ.

In support of this strange position, which some represent as the most important of christian duties, only one text is produced, and that most evidently misapplied.

2 Tim. i. 11, 12. "—The Gospel, whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able

to keep that which I have committed to him," την παραθηκην μου, my deposit, " against that day."

" That is," says Dr. Doddridge, " I know to whom I have trusted all my most important concerns; and I am fully persuaded that he is well able to keep that precious and immortal soul which I have deposited with him, unto that great and important day, when the promised salvation shall be completed."

But certainly this is not the true meaning of the apostle. The word παραθηκη occurs only in two other places in the New Testament. See Griesbach in loc. In this chapter it is repeated, ver. 14, where it is rendered, " that which was committed to thee;" and again, 1 Tim. vi. 20, " that which is committed to thy trust." In both passages it means the Gospel, the doctrine of Christ. And this is undoubtedly the sense in which the word is used here: " I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which he has intrusted to me unto that day." The holy and generous apostle triumphs in the thought, that, whatever becomes of himself, the great cause in which he is embarked shall never fail. The doctrine of Christ, the interest of truth and righteousness, shall survive and

prosper, and shall endure and advance to the end of time[1].

4. Christians are to devote themselves to the Service of Christ.

2 Cor. v. 14. "For the love of Christ constraineth us while we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again." See also Rom. xiv. 8, 9. Philip. i. 20, 21.

They live to Christ, whose lives are devoted to promote that cause for which he lived and died, and rose again; and to this end he died and rose, that all being now raised by him to the hope of life may consecrate their existence to his service.

II. *External Homage required or exemplified to Christ.*

1. Christ was worshiped during his Residence on Earth.

1. Matt. xxviii. 9. "Jesus met them,

[1] See Griesbach, Grotius, and Benson in loc. The case of Stephen, Acts vii. 59, is brought as an instance of committing the soul, *i. e.* the departing spirit, to the care of Christ. See Doddridge in loc. This passage is considered p. 373.

saying, All hail! and they came and held him by his feet, and worshiped him."—Ver. 17, "When they saw him, they worshiped him."

2. Luke xxiv. 51, 52. "While he blessed them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven: and they worshiped him." See also Matt. ix. 18; xv. 25. John ix. 38.

The worship in these instances offered to Christ was civil respect, not religious homage. The word προσκυνεω is often used in this sense, as well as the English word *worship*. Dan. ii. 48, "Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshiped Daniel."—Acts x. 25, "Cornelius fell at Peter's feet, and worshiped him." These were indications of high respect to persons visibly present, who were supposed to be messengers from God, but who were not believed to be themselves gods. But the question is concerning the lawfulness of addressing worship to Christ, now that he is no longer sensibly present.

2. Christ is said to challenge the same Honours which are due to the Father.

John v. 23. "That all men may honour the Son, even as (καθως) they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who sent him."

The obvious meaning is, that Christ, being the messenger of God, the very same regard is due to his message which would be due to an oracle delivered by God himself; and that to disregard Christ under this character is the same affront to the Supreme Being, as it would be to disregard the voice of God himself[a].

3. Baptism is to be administered into the Name of Christ, together with those of the Father and the Spirit.

Matt. xxviii. 19. " —teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Hence many have inferred the proper deity of Christ, and that he is the object of religious

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[a] " So far is this much-cited text from proving that divine worship is to be paid to Christ equally with the Father, that it does not relate to worship at all." Lindsey's Seq. p. 110, &c.—See also Clarke on the Trinity, No. 689. It is surprising that learned Trinitarians, and still more so that the Polish Socinians, should argue from this text, that the same honours which are due to God, are also to be paid to Christ. See Whitby, Doddridge, and Wolzogenius in loc. " Socinians," says Dr. Price, " choose to be called Unitarians; but they have no exclusive right to this title, and former Socinians had no right at all; for they concurred with Trinitarians in worshiping a deified man." Price's Serm. p. 143, note.

worship[3]. If there be any force in this conclusion, it must arise either from the name of Christ being introduced into the rite of baptism, or from its being connected in the same formulary with those of the Father and of the Holy Spirit.

That baptism into the name of any person signifies nothing more than the acknowledgement of his authority, and expresses no belief in his proper deity, is evident from what the apostle says of the Israelites, 1 Cor. x. 2, that they were "baptized into Moses." And when the same apostle expresses his apprehensions, 1 Cor. i. 15, "lest any should say that he had baptized into his own name," he could not suspect that they would represent him as claiming divine honours, but merely, as assuming to be the head and leader of the christian sect.

Nor does the uniting the name of the Son with that of the Father and the Holy Spirit in

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[3] "The christian church in succeeding ages has acted a wise and safe part in retaining these words: and they contain so strong an intimation that each of these persons is properly God, and that worship is to be paid, and glory to be ascribed, to each, that I cannot but hope they will be the means of maintaining the belief of the one, and the practice of the other, among the generality of christians to the end of time." Doddridge in loc.—See Grotius in loc.; and Lindsey's Apology, p. 117, &c.

the administration of baptism, prove the deity of Christ, or that he is any thing more than an exalted human being: much less does it prove that he is the proper object of religious worship. For, waving the consideration whether the text be genuine, whether it was intended as a formulary of the rite, whether the names of the Father and Spirit were ever used in primitive baptism, whether the precedents in the New Testament are not all into the name of Christ only; and finally, whether a positive institution, which contains no direct address to an invisible being, can with any propriety be regarded as an act of religious worship; it is certain that no inference of equality in rank or homage can be drawn from the association of different names in the same sentence. See 1 Chron. xxix. 20, "All the congregation bowed down their heads, and worshiped the Lord and the king."—1 Sam. xii. 18, "The people feared the Lord and the king."—1 Tim. v. 21, "I charge thee before God, and Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things."

4. Angels are required to worship Christ.

Heb. i. 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him:" *i. e.* Let all former prophets

and messengers acknowledge him as their superior. See p. 206.

5. Every Knee is to bow at the Name of Jesus.

Philip. ii. 9, 10. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that *at* the name," εν ονοματι, *in* the name, "of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," &c.

The learned Peirce, whose system countenanced the worship of Christ, explains this text in his paraphrase as not bearing upon that question. "Upon this account God has advanced him higher than before, and freely bestowed on him an authority that is superior to whatever he granted to any other: that *by virtue of the authority of Jesus* all should be constrained to submit to God."

6. Adjuration by Christ.

1 Thess. v. 27. "I charge," ορκιζω, I adjure, "you by the Lord, that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren."

Dr. Clarke observes, that the expression is ambiguous. God may be the person intended.

It seems indeed to be nothing more than a solemn request and charge.

7. Christ is appealed to as a Witness.

Rom. ix. 1. " I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not."

i. e. " Christ being my witness," says Dr. Clarke, No. 697. But the words admit of a different interpretation. Mr. Locke's explanation is, " As a christian I speak the truth :" and with him agree Crellius, Dr. Taylor, and many others. See 2 Cor. xii. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 7.

8. Christians are described as invoking the Name of Christ.

1. Acts ix. 14. " Ananias answered, Lord—he hath authority here from the chief priests to bind all that *call on thy name*[4]."

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[4] " επικαλεμενες το ονομα σε, all that call themselves by thy name." Wakefield.— Επικαλεομαι is used both in the active and the middle or reciprocal sense. ε μονον, προς βοηθειαν τινα παρακαλω, αλλα και, επονομαζομαι. Phavorinus apud Schleusner.—Acts vii. 59, " They stoned Stephen, επικαλεμενον, invoking and saying," &c. See 1 Pet. i. 17. Calling upon, or calling one's self by, the name of the Lord is no uncommon periphrasis for being truly religious. Deut. xxviii. 10. Joel ii. 32. Psalm lxxix. 6. James ii. 7. See Wakefield on Acts ii. 21.— " Hinc factum est, ut formula επικαλεισθαι ονομα τινος significaret in universum, *profiteri religionem alicujus*." Schleusner.

That Jesus was the person to whom this answer was addressed, is evident from ver. 17. But these words may be rendered, 'who are called,' or 'who call themselves, *after thy name*,' *i. e.* who profess themselves thy disciples. See Acts ix. 21; xxii. 16. Rom. x. 13, 14.

2. 1 Cor. i. 2. "—with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Or, rather, as Mr. Wakefield renders it, to all in every place "that take upon themselves the name of our Lord Jesus Christ[5]."

9. Dependence upon Christ for Direction and Success.

Philip. ii. 19. "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly."—Ver. 24, "I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."

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[5] Dr. Doddridge, in his note, remarks, "This strongly implies that it might well be taken for granted that every true christian would often pray to Christ, as well as address the Father in his name." More to the purpose is the observation of Mr. Locke, "'Called by the name of Jesus Christ.' These words are a periphrasis for christians, as is plain from the design of this verse."—"Επικαλεισθαι significat *cognominari*, Matt. x. 3. Luc. xxii. 3. Act. i. 23; iv. 36.; aliisque in locis, in quibus est passivæ, non activæ significationis. Igitur επικαλεισθαι ονομα est *vocari nomine*

The apostle in his journeys, and in the general execution of his mission, appears to have been under the special direction of Christ. See Acts xiii. 1, 2; xvi. 6, 7. 9, 10.

10. Doxologies alleged to be addressed to Christ.

1. 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18. "—the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever."

Dr. Clarke, No. 710, remarks, that "it is somewhat ambiguous whether this be spoken of Christ, or of God the Father, but that it seems rather to be meant of Christ." And where Christ is mentioned under the character of a king, glory or honour may fitly be ascribed to him; meaning thereby to express a wish that the glory of his kingdom may be everlasting, or that the great founder and ruler of this spiritual empire may be held in everlasting honour by his admiring and grateful subjects.

Jesu Christi quasi agnomine, quod notat singularem conjunctionem quæ nobis cum Christo intercedit, qualis est sponsæ cum viro, vel qualis servi cum hero, qui de nomine heri etiam appellatur. Itaque επικαλ. κ. τ. λ. est hic tantum periphrasis Christianorum." Hammond in loc.

2. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. "Now the God of peace make you perfect,—working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever."

Dr. Clarke observes, ibid. No. 744, that "it is ambiguous in the construction, whether this refers to Christ or to the Father." He applies the same remark, No. 746, to 1 Pet. iv. 11, where the relative may also refer to the remoter antecedent. And it is more consonant to the usual practice of the sacred writers to address doxologies to God.

3. 2 Pet. iii. 18. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Three manuscripts and the Syriac version add the words "and of God the Father." It is also to be remembered that the epistle itself is of doubtful authority.

4. Rev. i. 5, 6. "Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

One manuscript cited by Mill and Griesbach

reads thus: "Grace and peace from Jesus Christ,—even from him who loved us (τϖ αγαπησαντος,) and made us kings and priests to God —to him," (*i. e.* God,) "be glory." The very different readings of this disturbed passage, says Mr. Lindsey, Apol. p. 144, "show that it has suffered by the negligence of transcribers, and therefore no certain conclusion can be drawn from it."

11. Thanksgiving addressed to Christ.

1. Eph. v. 19, 20. "Singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord: giving thanks to God even the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The connexion seems to determine the word 'Lord' to be meant of God." Dr. Clarke, ibid. No. 713.—And in the parallel passage, Col. iii. 16, "singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord;" the best manuscripts and Griesbach's text read "God."

2. 1 Tim. i. 12. "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord, who hath enabled me; for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

The Clermont copy and Æthiopic version read, "I thank him who enabled me, εν Χριστϖ,

by Christ Jesus." But the Received Text is the best supported, and is a very proper expression of the apostle's gratitude for the great personal obligations he was under to Christ.

3. Rev. v. 8—14. "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, —and they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book,—for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.— And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne,—saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Upon this splendid description of the whole creation, as united in ascribing honour and thanksgiving to God and the Lamb, we may remark,

1. That the authenticity of the book is doubtful. No doctrine therefore is to be admitted upon this evidence, which is clearly to

be proved from other undisputed Scriptures.—2. The whole scene is visionary, and, in a literal sense, impossible: and it is unreasonable to argue from visions to realities.—3. The foundation of the homage paid to the Lamb is, that he was slain: therefore he is not God, nor entitled to divine honours.—4. The homage paid is addressed to a person sensibly and visibly present; it cannot therefore authorize religious addresses to the same being, when he is not sensibly present.—5. It has been already proved (page 363), that the association of the name of God with that of some other person, even in an act of worship, by no means proves equality of nature, rank, or homage.—6. Admitting the genuineness and inspiration of the Apocalypse, the lofty and symbolical language of prophecy may possibly mean nothing more than to express the joy and gratitude of the whole human race at the triumphs of the Gospel[6].

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[6] "The blessing and honour is tendered to the object present and visible;—the reason assigned shows that he cannot be God, *viz.* his being the Lamb that was slain, *i. e.* spotless innocence, perfect virtue and goodness tried and confirmed by sufferings. Ascribing glory and honour to Christ does in no degree authorize the worship of him, or prayer to him. It is no more than a declaration of reverence and high esteem of his most perfect moral character and goodness." Linds. Apol. p. 145.; Seq. p. 96.

12. Christ invoked in Prayer.

1. " They stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

The example of Stephen is regarded by many as decisive in favour of the practice of addressing prayer to Christ. He was full of the holy spirit, chap. vi. 5; and in the very article of death, he prays to Christ in language exactly similar to that which, in the same circumstances, Jesus used to his heavenly Father: Luke xxiii. 46.

But to wave the remark, that the solitary unauthorized example of this good man would of itself be no sufficient warrant for a practice contrary to the precepts of Christ, and the doctrine of his apostles, which are the only proper directory of christian worship, it may be observed, that this holy proto-martyr had just been favoured with an actual vision of our Lord, ver. 55, and that the vivid impression of it, if not the vision itself, must have continued on his mind, so that he had a certain knowledge, if not a visible perception, of the real presence of Christ. The example of this primitive martyr, therefore, does not fall within the limit of religious worship, nor in the least degree authorize

addresses to Christ when he is not sensibly present[7].

2. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. " —there was given me a thorn in the flesh. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.—And he said unto me, My strength," δυναμις, " is made perfect in weakness,—gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power," δυναμις, the strength, " of Christ may rest upon me."

Mr. Lindsey, Apol. p. 147, with Hammond, Beausobre, and others, conceives that the apostle's prayer was addressed to the Father. But the context plainly indicates the contrary. The person to whom he prayed was Christ, who had promised to remain with the apostles to the end of the age, who had repeatedly appeared to Paul in person and in vision, and to whom the apostle applied upon some occasion, when it is evident that his Master was sensibly present with him, for he cites the very words of our Lord's reply. But this is no warrant to others who are not indulged with the same privilege.

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[7] See Mr. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 6—71. Haynes on the Attributes, p. 152. Lindsey's Exam. of Robinson's Plea, Sect. VI.

13. Devout Wishes of Blessings from Christ supposed to be equivalent to Prayers.

Wishes and prayers are very far from being terms of the same import. A wish is merely the expression of desire. Prayer is that expression addressed to one who is supposed to be present, and able to accomplish it. And if this person, though not sensibly, is believed to be really present, prayer is an act of religious worship. To wish may be innocent and proper in some cases in which prayer would be unreasonable and idolatrous. I may innocently wish that a person in power may grant an office to a friend, to ask for which, if the person were present, might or might not be proper according to circumstances; but to pray to him for it when he is absent, with an expectation that he will hear and grant the request, would be downright idolatry.

Paul and the other sacred writers commonly begin and end their epistles with devout wishes for evangelical blessings from God and Christ, upon those to whom their epistles are addressed. These have been regarded by many as equivalent to prayers and acts of religious worship of Christ equally with God, from which they have

inferred that Christ is truly God, and the proper object of divine worship[8]. But this conclusion is certainly erroneous. Otherwise it would follow from the benediction, Rev. i. 4, "Grace be to you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne," that these seven spirits also are proper objects of divine worship.

The Gospel is often called 'grace or favour,' because it is a free, unmerited, unsolicited, unpurchased gift. Sometimes it is called the 'grace or favour,' or 'free gift of God,' because it comes originally from God,—sometimes, as Philip. iv. 23, it is called 'the favour of Christ,' because Christ was the authorized publisher of these glad tidings. And the purport of the benevolent wish so often repeated

[8] Melancthon, in a letter to Camerarius, in 1532, after predicting the disputes and disturbances which would some time or other arise about the Trinity, adds, "I take refuge in those plain declarations of Scripture, which enjoin prayer to Christ, which is to ascribe the proper honour of divinity to him, and is full of consolation."— See Mr. Lindsey's Apol. p. 150. So Crellius argues in his Note upon 1 Thess. iii. 11, "Insigne ut curæ et providentiæ circa nos Domini Jesu argumentum, ita invocati ipsius exemplum. Votum enim ejusmodi, quod eum a quo aliquid voveo audire sum persuasus, precationis vim habet, atque adeo ipsa, licet indirecta, precatio est."

in the apostolic writings, is, that those who are the object of it may enjoy all the blessings of the Gospel dispensation, which is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, by whom these glad tidings were communicated to the world.

1. Rom. i. 7. "Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." *q. d.* May that peace be yours which is the fruit of the Gospel, the free gift of God by Jesus Christ. See chap. xvi. 20. 1 Cor. i. 3; xvi. 23. 2 Cor. i. 2.

2. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion" or participation "of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." *q. d.* May you all enjoy the inestimable blessings of the gospel of Christ, the favour of God, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

3. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts." *q. d.* May your hearts be comforted by the love of God revealed in the gospel of Christ.

4. 1 Tim. i. 2. "Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from Jesus

Christ our Lord." *q. d.* May you obtain forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God, which are the privileges of the Gospel dispensation. Here, grace, mercy, and peace are put for the mercy and peace of the Gospel, as the way, the truth, and the life are put, John xiv. 16, for the true way to life.

In the same manner other similar expressions of devout and benevolent wishes may be explained. And upon the whole, we have abundant reason to conclude, that there is neither precept nor example in the New Testament to warrant the addressing of prayers or any other kind of religious worship to Christ. To one who forms his judgement from the New Testament, the Father only is God, and the proper and sole object of religious worship.

SECTION XII.

ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THE PROPER HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

It is not necessary to the establishment of the proper humanity of Jesus Christ to produce specific arguments for this purpose. For who would require proof that one who appears in all respects as a man, is in fact a proper human being? If Christ had, as is universally allowed, all the external appearance of a man, he must in all reason be considered as a man, in no other way distinguished from his brethren than as being invested with an extraordinary divine commission. Whoever maintains that Christ is a being of superior order, an angel, a super-angelic Logos, or a God, it is incumbent upon him to substantiate his assertion by clear and satisfactory evidence. If these arguments, after being carefully examined, are found to be insufficient, it is not at all necessary to produce proof that Christ is a mere man. The conclu-

sion follows irresistibly, and of course. In the preceding sections, all the evidence in favour of the pre-existence and superior nature of Christ has been produced and investigated; and if we are satisfied that these texts, neither singly nor collectively, contain any valid proof of this important point, the assumption falls to the ground, and the proper humanity of Christ remains as a plain indisputable fact. As, however, the contrary opinion has for many ages been the prevailing belief of the christian world, it may be of use to annex a concise view of the arguments which tend more immediately to establish and confirm the doctrine that Jesus Christ was a man in all respects like other men, except in having been selected by divine wisdom to be the messenger of truth and mercy to mankind.

I. The total silence of the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke concerning our Lord's pre-existence and divinity is utterly unaccountable, if these stupendous facts are true, and were known to those writers. This plain and unanswerable argument has been stated before [1].

[1] See above, Sect. III. p. 15. Also, Letters upon Arianism, in Reply to Mr. B. Carpenter, Lett. 8. Modern theologians pay little attention to this difficulty, which appears to have created,

II. The pre-existence and divinity of Christ are no where taught as doctrines of revelation, but are left to be inferred from indirect argu-

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as it well might, very considerable embarrassment to the ancient ecclesiastical writers, who ascribe the silence of the evangelists to their great prudence in avoiding to shock the prejudices of their hearers, by divulging the obnoxious doctrine of Christ's divinity. Athanasius says, "the Jews of that age thought that Christ was a mere man, resembling other descendants of David, and did not believe either that he was God, or that the Word was made flesh. On this account the blessed apostles, with great prudence, in the first place taught what related to the humanity of our Saviour to the Jews, that they might afterwards bring them to the belief of his divinity." Athanas. Opp. vol. i. p. 553.—Dr. Priestley's Early Opinions, vol. iii. p. 89.

Chrysostom says, "'In the beginning was the Word.' This doctrine was not published at first, for the world would not receive it. Wherefore Matthew, Mark, and Luke began at a distance:—they did not immediately say what was becoming his dignity, but what would suit the hearers. John, the son of thunder, advanced to the doctrine of the divinity. As the lightening precedes the thunder, they flashed the œconomy (*i. e.* the humanity) of Christ: but he thundered out the divinity." Chrysost. de Sig. Opp. vol. vi. p. 171.—Priestley, ibid. p. 130. This writer also represents the apostle John as holding a soliloquy with himself when he was about to write his history. "Why do I delay? Why do I not publish what angels are ignorant of? Why do I not write what Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, through a wise and praiseworthy timidity passed over in silence, according to the orders which were given them? I will write a book which will stop the mouths of all who speak unjustly of God. Leaving all things that come to pass from time, and in time, I will speak of that which is without all time, and is uncreated, the

ments, obscure phraseology, and ambiguous hints.

The doctrine of a future life, which is truly a

Logos of God." Chrys. ibid. vol. vi. p. 606. Dr. Priestley, ibid. p. 134.

Epiphanius says, "the blessed John, coming and finding men employed about the humanity of Christ, and the Ebionites in an error about the genealogy, and the Cerinthians and Merinthians maintaining that he was a mere man, descended of human parents, as coming last he began to call back the wanderers, and those who were employed about the humanity of Christ." Epiphan. Opp. vol. i. p. 747. Dr. Priestley, ibid. p. 140.

Jerome says, "John the apostle, whom Jesus loved, wrote his gospel last of all, at the intreaty of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and other heretics, and especially against the doctrine of the Ebionites, then gaining ground, who said that Christ had no existence before he was born of Mary." Hieronym. Opp. vol. i. p. 273. Dr. Priestley, ibid. p. 142.

The prudent timidity and reserve which, by these early writers, is ascribed to the evangelists, is utterly unworthy of their character, and has no foundation in fact. Nor would it be admitted by modern advocates of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ. The truth is, that the sacred writers never mention these extraordinary facts, because they had never heard of them. Otherwise silence would have been impossible. To write the life of Cæsar, and forget the battle of Pharsalia, or to publish the history of Nelson, and to omit the victories of the Nile and of Trafalgar, would be nothing in comparison with three historians undertaking to write the life of Christ, and one of them carrying on the history of the promulgation of christianity to thirty years after our Lord's ascension, without giving one single hint that the subject of their narrative was the Maker of the world himself in an incarnate form, if they had known this extraordinary fact.

doctrine of revelation, is taught in the most explicit language, so that no believer in the mission of Christ can possibly entertain a doubt of it. And if Christ were God, or the Maker and Supporter of the world under God, this doctrine being of such high importance would, no doubt, have been taught with equal clearness and precision. That it is not so taught is abundantly evident from the numerous controversies which have subsisted, and which continue to subsist upon that subject, and that not only among the ignorant and prejudiced, but among persons equally honest, and learned, and inquisitive, and equally desirous of knowing the truth.

III. The apostles either did or did not know of the pre-existent state and dignity of Christ during his personal ministry, and while they were personally conversant with him.

If it is maintained that they were informed of this amazing fact, it may justly be asked, when did they first come to the knowledge of it? What marks are there of that astonishment and terror with which their minds must have been overwhelmed when this extraordinary secret was first divulged to them? How could they ever recover themselves from this constér-

nation so far as to be able afterwards to associate and converse freely and familiarly with their Maker and their God, to put questions to him, and occasionally even to contradict and rebuke him; and finally, to desert him when he was arrested, judged, and crucified?—It is indeed alleged, that this impression of astonishment and dismay would gradually wear off. But the fact is, that it does not appear to have been ever excited. Through the whole course of his ministry, our Lord was uniformly treated by his associates and disciples as a man, highly distinguished, indeed, by divine communications and powers: but in no other respect different from his brethren. Their whole conduct to Christ is utterly unaccountable upon any other supposition. To affirm that the impression of his infinite superiority, if revealed, would have worn off, is gratuitous and improbable, nay, impossible, in the few short months or years in which he lived amongst them. Did Abraham or Moses ever approach to that familiarity in their intercourse with God, which the apostles continually used, even to the very last, in conversing with Jesus? Let us for a moment make the case our own. If the discovery should unexpectedly be made, that a person with whom we have for

some time associated as a companion, whom we have loved as a friend, have revered as an instructor, and have venerated as a saint,—is not what we have always presumed him to be, a man like ourselves, but an angel in human form; is it possible that we could ever recover from the astonishment which this discovery would occasion, so as to converse with him again upon the same terms of familiarity and ease? What, then, would be the effect produced, if it were ascertained that this person was our Maker and our God?—Nothing could be so disturbing to the mind, or so offensive to the prejudices of a Jew, as the novel and strange doctrines of subordinate Jehovahs, of delegated Creators, and of trinities of equal persons in a unity of the divine essence: and yet, as some think, all this was revealed to the apostles during the personal ministry of our Saviour, without giving birth to one single expression of surprise, or calling forth a single comment.

The difficulties upon the supposition that this information was communicated to the apostles during the personal ministry of our Saviour are indeed so great, that it has been a prevailing opinion with many, that the doctrines of our

Lord's pre-existence and divinity were not completely divulged till after his ascension[a]. But this concession creates an equal difficulty on the other side. For, if the pre-existence and divinity of Christ were not known to his disciples during his personal ministry, it is plain that many passages, which are now alleged as clear and unequivocal assertions of those doctrines, must have been understood by the persons to whom they were immediately addressed in a sense compatible with our Lord's proper humanity. And the Unitarians are no longer to be arraigned as perverting the plain lan-

[a] This question is not yet completely settled by the believers in these doctrines; nor has it indeed been attended to as its importance deserves. For I will venture to say, it can never be solved upon the hypothesis of Arianism or Trinitarianism, so as to satisfy a judicious and impartial inquirer. The late ingenious and pious Mr. Gilpin, vicar of Boldre, in his Exposition of the New Testament, explains John xiv. 7, as a declaration of the divinity of Christ. *q. d.* "They who know me know the Father also." To which the apostle Philip very coolly replies, "If that be the case, give us some extraordinary sign, that WE MAY KNOW YOUR EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER." And our Lord having given his disciple satisfaction in this point, the conversation goes on as usual. The learned commentator, to confirm his exposition, adds in a note, "Philip did not want proof of the Father, in whom he already believed; but he wanted proof of that equality which Jesus asserted he had with the Father." Can any thing be more

guage of Scripture, when they interpret such phrases as "ascending into and descending from heaven," "existing before Abraham," "having glory with the Father before the world was," and the like, as referring, not to local situation and actual pre-existence, but to a divine commission, and to existence in the divine purpose.

IV. The Jews in the apostolic age never charged the Christians with polytheism or idolatry.

The apostles and their followers were loudly impeached by the Jews as 'pestilent fellows,' as 'movers of sedition,' as 'men that turned the

extraordinary and incredible, than that such an astonishing discovery should have passed without any particular notice, as a mere ordinary topic of conversation? In any similar case, if such a case could be imagined, Mr. Gilpin would have been one of the first to see and remark the absurdity, for he was a man of sense, and taste, and feeling. But such is the power of prejudice to fascinate even the wise. How very differently, and how much more naturally, did the people of Lystra act, when, from the miraculous cure of the lame man, they concluded that Paul and Barnabas were gods, who had descended from heaven in human shape! The whole city was in commotion, and it was with great difficulty that they were restrained from offering sacrifices to the apostles: Acts xiv. 11. Analogous to these would have been the feelings and the conduct of the disciples of Jesus, if they had believed him to be the Lord their Maker. See Priestley, Early Opin. vol. i. p. 23.

world upside down,' as 'blasphemers of the law,' as 'profaners of the temple,' but never as idolaters, as the worshipers of false gods, as men that introduced new objects of religious worship, or who violated the great and fundamental doctrine of the unity of God. But this charge has been uniformly and vehemently urged by the Jews against the christian religion ever since the doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ have been received as articles of faith.

Chrysostom says, "As to the Jews, who had daily heard and been taught out of the law, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord, and beside him there is no other;' having seen Jesus nailed to a cross; yea, having killed and buried him themselves, and not having seen him risen again; if they had heard that this very person was God, and equal to the Father, would they not have rejected it, and spurned at it with the utmost indignation? On this account the apostles brought them forward gently, and by slow degrees, and used great art in condescending to their weakness[3]."

V. Christ is repeatedly and emphatically

[3] Chrysostom. Opp. vol. viii, p. 417. Priestley, Hist. Early Opin. vol. iii. p. 101

called a MAN even after his resurrection and ascension; and that without any qualification or reserve, even where the case seemed to require it, and where the writer would not have failed to introduce some qualifying expression had he conceived of Christ as a being different from, and superior to, the rest of mankind.

Acts ii. 22, "Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN approved of God among you by miracles," &c.—xvii. 31, "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom he hath ordained."—1 Cor. xv. 21, "For since by MAN came death, by MAN also came the resurrection of the dead."—1 Tim. ii. 5, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the MAN Christ Jesus[4]."

Dr. Price, Serm. p. 140, says, "that according to all opinions Christ was truly a man, and is properly so called. Had the Scriptures called

[4] "There is one and the same, and only one mediator between God and men of all nations, even the great and glorious, yea, divine man Jesus Christ, who assumed human nature into personal union with himself as the Son of God, and so was truly man as well as God." Dr. Guyse in loc.—Such is the addition which orthodoxy makes to evangelical simplicity. Paul's language would have been as guarded as that of his commentator, had his ideas been the same.

him a man, and added that he was no more than man, this question would have been decided." And Mr. H. Taylor, Ben Mordecai, Lett. No. 2, observes, " that Christ is a man in the common sense of the word; that is, a spiritual being inhabiting a human body; in which sense the word may include the highest spiritual being in heaven capable of incarnation, as well as the lowest upon earth. The angel with whom Jacob wrestled is called ' a man,' Gen. xxxii. 24, and ' God,' ver. 30."

Mr. Lindsey, Seq. p. 392, replies, " that though it cannot be denied that spiritual beings personating men are sometimes so called, it is only by the sacred historians, who describe their outward appearance, or by the persons to whom they appeared while they were under a deception concerning them. To call an angelic being shut up in a human body, as in a box or case, and animating it, to call this compound being a man, is uncountenanced by Scripture, or any true philosophy. If indeed you suppose a suspension or quiescence of the powers of this presumed great pre-existent spirit of Christ, during its confinement in a human body, he might then properly enough have been called a man, while in such a state. But then if he lost all consci-

ousness of what he was before, and all use of former powers and knowledge, it was to all intents the same as if he had never been possessed of them. He might as well have been a mere man. In the Scripture there is no intimation of Christ's forgetfulness of what he had formerly been; no account of any abridgement of the talents and abilities enjoyed by him in a former state; or of any abasement or degrading of himself in leaving it, and entering upon this."

VI. Jesus calls himself the Son of Man.

Matt. xvi. 13. "Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Concerning this title it is observable, 1. That it is applied by Jesus to himself upwards of forty times in the New Testament: it occurs in all the evangelists.—2. This title is never used by any person in addressing our Lord himself, nor by any one in writing or speaking of him, except by Stephen, Acts vii. 56, "I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God;" and by John in Rev. i. 13, and perhaps xiv. 14.—3. The expression 'son of man' is a common periphrasis for a man himself; and in this sense it occurs frequently in the Old Testament, and sometimes in the

New. See Ps. viii. 4. Prov. viii. 31. Eccles. ii. 8. Mark iii. 28. Eph. iii. 5.—4. This title occurs continually in the prophecy of Ezekiel, where it seems commonly to express a person invested with a prophetical character. Ezek. xxxiii. 7, "O son of man, I have set thee as a watchman to the house of Israel."—5. This phrase occurs, Dan. vii. 13, in a connexion in which it has been understood both by Jews and Christians to signify the Messiah. "I saw in the night-visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven :—and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom." The expression, however, may possibly signify nothing more than a person in human form; and it is observable, that as in the interpretation of the vision the other symbols are explained, not of persons but of empires, so this symbol of a human figure is explained not of an individual, but of the kingdom of the saints, of the Most High. See ver. 18. 22. 27.—6. Christ speaks of himself emphatically as THE Son of Man; by which form of expression it is probable that he not only means to describe himself as a proper human being, but to insinuate that he was himself that Messiah whom they understood to be foretold

by the prophet Daniel. That the phrase 'Son of Man' was regarded as nearly equivalent to that of Messiah, is apparent from John xii. 34, "We have heard from the Law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou then that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" The expression, however, is ambiguous; and our Lord perhaps chose to adopt it when speaking of himself in public, in order to excite attention to his claim, and at the same time to avoid an explicit declaration that he was the Messiah, which he generally declined during his personal ministry.

VII. Christ appeared as a man, with all the attributes and feelings of a human being; and he was universally regarded as such by those who saw and conversed with him.

1. Jesus was born into the world like other men. John xviii. 37, "To this end was I born." —2. He had a mean education, and probably followed the occupation of a carpenter. Mark vi. 3, "Is not this the carpenter?" John vii. 15, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"—3. He felt, conversed, and acted as a human being. 1.) Filial duty and affection: John xix. 26, 27, while suspended

on the cross, he committed his mother to the care of the beloved disciple.—2.) Joy: Luke x. 21, "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced."—3.) Sorrow and tears: John xi. 35, "Jesus wept."—4.) Indignation: Mark iii. 5, "And when he had looked around on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their heart."—5.) Friendship: John xxi. 20, "The disciple whom Jesus loved."—6.) Human actions are attributed to him: Acts x. 28, "He went about doing good."—7.) He conversed as a human being: Luke xxiv. 32, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way?"

4. Our Lord sustained the infirmities of human nature, and suffered and died like other men. 1.) He suffered hunger and thirst: Luke iv. 2, "And when the days were ended, he was afterwards hungry."—John xix. 28, "He saith, I thirst."—2.) Weariness and fainting: John iv. 6, "Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well."—3.) Want of the necessaries of life: Luke ix. 58, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."—4.) Agony and death: Luke xxii. 44, "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly." xxiii. 46, "He said, Father, into thy

hands I commend my spirit. And having said this, he expired."

5. He was regarded and treated as a human being by those who associated and conversed with him. Matt. xiii. 54, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary; and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas; and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him." Luke xxiii. 47, "Now, when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man."

These facts constitute the strongest possible presumption that Jesus of Nazareth was a proper human being, a man like other men. Nor is it at all necessary for the establishment of this fact that the Scriptures should, as Dr. Price suggests, declare that Jesus was a man, and nothing more than a man; any more than it would be necessary in order to prove the humanity of Moses or Elijah, to say of those great prophets, that they were men, and no more than men. The fact establishes itself by its own notoriety and the common sense of mankind,

unless rebutted by evidence far more clear and unequivocal than any which ever has been, or, I will venture to say, ever can be produced to the contrary.

VIII. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews directly asserts, and from the necessity of the case argues, that Christ, in order to accomplish the purposes of his mission, should be a man, and not a being of an order superior to the human race. Heb. ii. 5—18.

The word *angel* being ambiguous, and the writer having used it, in the course of his argument, (chap. i.) to establish the superiority of the founder of the new dispensation to all former prophets and messengers of God; in order to guard his readers against a conclusion into which they might be led by the ambiguity of the language, he sets himself directly to prove that this distinguished teacher was not, and could not be, an angelic being, but was a real suffering man. It is no objection to this interpretation that he now uses the word 'angel' in a different sense from what he had before done, without giving notice of the change. Such inaccuracies of style are not uncommon in the Sacred Writings: and this author had before

availed himself of the equivocal sense of the word 'angel,' chap. i. 7.

Ver. 5, "God hath not subjected to angels the succeeding age of which we speak." And having shown that in the Book of Psalms, man is described as a being a little inferior to angels, he adds, ver. 9, "We see Jesus who *was*," (not 'who was *made*,' but 'who *was*,' *i. e.* by nature,) "a little inferior to angels;" or, in other words, a human being. He then proceeds to state the expedience that the deliverer of mankind from death should himself be a suffering man; after which he draws the conclusion, ver. 14, 15, "Since, therefore, the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, himself likewise," or, completely, in perfect conformity, παραπλησιως, see Peirce, "was partaker of the same," *i. e.* he was as truly, properly, and *completely* a human being, as any of those whom he came to rescue from the fear of death. "Which fear," as he goes on to observe, ver. 16, "did not lay hold on," could not extend to, "angels, but did lay hold on," did extend to, and seize, "the seed of Abraham[5]." It was right for him therefore "in

[5] See Theolog. Repos. vol. v. p. 164; and Improved Version in loc.

all things," κατα παντα, in every respect without exception, "to *be*," not to be *made*, see Wakefield, "like unto his brethren." *q. d.* Had angels been subject to the fear of death, an angel might have been sent to save them: but as men alone are subject to this terror, it was expedient that one who was properly a human being should be commissioned to deliver them from it[6].

Thus it appears, not only that the Christian Scriptures do not teach the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus Christ, but that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, as though he had foreseen the errors and corruptions of later times, argues expressly against it, and proves that it would have been inexpedient that the Saviour of the world should have been any other than a suffering human being.

IX. The great body of primitive christians, both Jews and Gentiles, for the two first centu-

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[6] It is hardly necessary to point out the gross mistranslation of this text in the public version; *viz.* "he took not on him the nature of angels." Every intelligent reader knows that the words will not admit of this construction. Archbishop Newcome's translation is, "Christ helpeth not angels." See Doddridge, Peirce, and Sykes in loc. Imp. Version and notes.

ries and upwards, were Unitarians, and believers in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ[7].

This is an argument of great weight in the controversy concerning the person of Christ: for the doctrine which the first christians held must have been that which the first preachers taught.

The first impression of the first believers, of those who were personal witnesses to the facts related in the gospels, must have been, that Jesus of Nazareth was one of the human race, selected from the rest of mankind as a prophet of God, distinguished from all other prophets by the importance of his doctrine, the frequency and splendour of his miraculous works, and, above all, by his resurrection from the dead. This is the opinion which all would naturally entertain concerning Christ, till they were further instructed in the sublime doctrines of his pre-existence and divinity.

To modern christians, who, from habit and

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[7] This is a fact which Dr. Priestley has, I think, established beyond all dispute in his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, in his Controversies with Badcock and Bishop Horsley, and, above all, in his learned, laborious, and invaluable work, The History of Early Opinions concerning the Person of Christ.

association, read the books of the New Testament as if they had been composed by one person, or by a few persons writing in concert, the difficulty seldom occurs of accounting for the omission of the doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus Christ by the majority of the writers, and particularly by three out of four of the historians of his life. But to the ancients, who were more familiar with the idea that these books were written at different times, in different places, with different views, by different authors, and for different churches, the objection occurred in its full force; and they could find no better solution of the difficulty than by ascribing this extraordinary omission to "the prudent caution," and "praiseworthy timidity[8]," of the apostles and evangelists, in not divulging a doctrine so offensive to the Jews, and so dangerous to the Gentiles[9]. These reasons, though perhaps the

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[8] "μετα πολλης της συνεσεως." Athanasius.—"δι' επαινεμενην δειλιαν." Chrysostom.

[9] See p. 380, note; also p. 383. Origen says, "John *alone* introduced the knowledge of the eternity of Christ." Opp. vol. ii. p. 428.—Eusebius says, "John *began* the doctrine of the divinity of Christ." Hist. lib. iii. c. 24.—See Dr. Priestley, Hist. Early Op. vol. iii. p. 125. 127.—"The apostle does not speak plainly con-

best that could be offered, will not satisfy a modern inquirer: but the fact remains the same. The doctrine of Christ's pre-existence and divinity was not taught plainly till the apostle John wrote his gospel, which Lardner places A. D. 68, and Jones and others later than A. D. 90.[10] But what the apostles did not teach, the first christians did not believe. The christian church therefore must have been Unitarian, at least till the apostle John wrote his gospel.

But there is no evidence that any change took place in the sentiments of the great body of christians in consequence of the publication of St. John's gospel. He is said by Irenæus to have written against the Gnostics, and by Origen, and others who came after him, to have written againt the Ebionites also[11]. That the apostle wrote with much indignation and asperity against the former is manifest. Against the Docetæ, a sect of Gnostics who taught that Jesus was indeed the Christ, but that he

cerning the deity of Christ, because polytheism abounded, and lest he should be thought to introduce many gods." Theophylact in 1 Tim. ii. 5.—See Priestley, ibid. book iii. chap. vi.

[10] Lardner's Hist. of Evang. vol. i. p. 387. 389. ed. 1.

[11] See Priestley, ibid. book i. chap. iii. sect. 5, 6; also vol. iii. p. 124.

was a man in appearance only, and not in reality, the apostle writes, 1 John iv. 3, "Every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," *i. e.* who confesses that Jesus is the Christ, but who denies that he is a real man, "is not of God. It is the spirit of antichrist." And against those Gnostics who acknowledged Jesus to be a real man, but who denied him to be the Christ, maintaining that Christ was one of the celestial Æons or emanations, who descended into Jesus at his baptism, but deserted him at his crucifixion, the apostle writes, 1 John ii. 22, "Who is a liar, but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" No such language as this is to be found in the writings of this apostle concerning the Unitarians. And the supposition that John wrote the introduction to his gospel against the Ebionites, or Unitarians, is clearly confuted by the fact that the expression "in the beginning," which introduces the gospel of John, signifies almost uniformly in the apostle's writings, not the beginning of time, but the beginning of the gospel dispensation. But as it is conceded that Unitarians abounded in the apostolic age; if John did not write against them, it is highly probable that he agreed with them: for few Trinitarians will

now deny that the heresy of the Ebionites was at least as dangerous, and as deserving of animadversion, as that of the Gnostics. And so, no doubt, would the apostle have thought, had he believed the present popular doctrine concerning the person of Christ.

The ancient Unitarians always maintained that theirs was the prevailing doctrine in the church till the time of Victor bishop of Rome, about A. D. 200, who excommunicated Theodotus of Byzantium, a learned Unitarian. This assertion of the Unitarians is contradicted, but not disproved, by Eusebius and others[12].

The early Unitarians being the mass of believers, few of whom were philosophers and speculative men, had not many writers among them, and few of their works are now extant[13]. All that we know of them is from the writings of their adversaries. It is however certain that they abounded in the apostolic age; and that they long constituted a very large proportion,

[12] Euseb. Hist. lib. v. cap. 28. Priestley, ibid. lib. iii. chap. xv. § 1.

[13] The Clementine Homilies, supposed to be written about the time of Justin Martyr, are the production of an Unitarian, and is almost the only Unitarian Treatise of Ecclesiastical Antiquity now extant. See Priestley, ibid. vol. i. p. 113.

and probably even the majority, of believers, may be reasonably inferred from their having no appropriate name; also from their not having been excommunicated like the Gnostics, and branded as heretics, which they certainly would have been if Arians or Trinitarians had at that time possessed the ascendancy. The respect with which they are mentioned by Justin Martyr, the first who taught the divinity of the Logos, plainly indicates that their numbers were not to be despised. In his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, his opponent says: "This doctrine,—that Christ was a God existing before the ages, and then born a man,—is not only extraordinary, but ridiculous." Justin replies: "I know that this doctrine appears strange, and especially to those of your race (Jews): but it will not follow that he is not the Christ, though I should not be able to prove that he pre-existed as God, and that he became a man by the Virgin. It will be right to say that in this only I have been mistaken; and not that he is not the Christ, though he should appear to be a man born as other men are, and to be made Christ by election. For there are some of our race (*Gentiles*) who acknowledge him to be Christ, but hold that he was a man born like other

men. With them I do not agree, nor should I do so, *though ever so many being of the same opinion should urge it upon me*[14]; because we are commanded by Christ himself not to obey

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[14] "Οἷς, ἐ συντιθεμαι, εἰ δ' αν πλειστοι, ταυτα μοι δοξασαντες, εἰποιεν. Quibus ego non assentior, neque, etiamsi multo plures essent, assentirer." Thirlby, p. 235, not.—"To whom I could not yield my assent; no, not even if the majority of christians should think the same:" Badcock, in the Monthly Rev. for June 1783, who considers it as a declaration that the majority of christians coincided in opinion with Justin himself.—"To whom I do not assent, though the majority may have told me that they had been of the same opinion:" Mr. Cappe, who in his vindication of Dr. Priestley contends, that the words properly express that the majority of christians held opinions contrary to those of the writer.—At any rate, and whatever be the meaning of Justin, how different the language of this virtuous and candid, though mistaken writer, from that of the angry opponents of the same doctrine in modern times! "If your opinion is true," said one of Dr. Priestley's early and zealous antagonists, "I will throw my Bible into the fire." But what says the venerable martyr in a similar case? "If your doctrine be true, it only follows that I am mistaken as to the pre-existence and deity of Jesus; but he is still the Christ, though he became so only by election." What occasions this remarkable difference between Mr. Venn and Justin Martyr? The true reason is this: Mr. Venn wrote in an age when Trinitarianism was triumphant, and Unitarianism in disgrace: Justin Martyr wrote at a time when Unitarianism was held in honour, and the pre-existence and divinity of Christ were novel and obnoxious opinions. After all, I must confess that I am not quite satisfied with any one of the translations of these learned writers. The true version of this celebrated passage appears to me to be the following: "With

the teachings of men, but what was taught by the holy prophets and himself." This is plainly the language of one who wishes to conciliate regard to a novel and offensive opinion, which might possibly be erroneous; and not of one who advocates the cause of a triumphant majority.

The testimony of Origen, who wrote in the beginning of the third century, to the proper Unitarianism of the body of Jewish christians in his time, is direct and full. "The word *Ebion*," says he, "in the Jewish language signifies *poor:* and those of the Jews who believe Jesus to be the Christ are called *Ebionites.*" And in his Commentary upon Matthew, he introduces a distinction among the Jews who believed in Christ; "some thinking

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whom I do not agree: nor should I, even though the majority, who are of the same opinion with me, ταυτα μει δοξασαντες, had affirmed it."—"Ταυτα δοξαζειν αλληλοις, eandem habere opinionem." Xenoph. ap. Constantin. Lex. in Verb.—It is probable that Justin here particularly alludes to the fact of the miraculous conception, which was at that time pretty generally credited by the Gentile christians. And this was the subject last mentioned, that Christ was a man born as other men. He can hardly be supposed to refer to the pre-existence and divinity of the Logos, which he had just acknowledged to be a strange doctrine, παραδοξος ὁ λογος, both to Jewish and Gentile believers, though principally to the former.

him to be the Son of Joseph and Mary, and others of Mary only and the divine Spirit, but not believing his divinity." And in another passage he speaks of the Ebionites *of both sorts*, as not receiving the Epistles of Paul[15].

Eusebius, who wrote a century afterwards, confirms the testimony of Origen concerning the Ebionites. "Those by the ancients called Ebionites, think meanly," says he, "concerning Christ: for they think him to be merely a man like other men, but approved on account of his virtue, being the son of Mary's husband. Others, called by the same name, do not deny that the Lord was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit; but, disallowing that he pre-existed as God, the logos, and wisdom, they were perverted to the impiety of the former." He adds, that "they observed the Jewish Law, and used only the Gospel according to the Hebrews[16]."

To this argument it has been objected, that the Ebionites were merely a sect of Hebrew christians; that they coincided with the Naza-

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[15] Origen in Cels. lib. ii. p. 56. Comm. in Matt. vol. i. p. 427. Edit. Huet. in Cels. lib. vi. p. 274. Priestley, ibid. vol. iii. p. 166.

[16] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 27. Priestley, ibid. p. 168. I have a little altered Dr. Priestley's translation, to what appeared to be both more literal and more pertinent.

renes in their adherence to the Law, for which both sects were deemed heretical by the Gentile christians; but that the orthodoxy of the Nazarenes in other points, and particularly concerning the person of Christ, was unimpeached. Also, that both the sects united constituted but a small part of the body of Jewish christians[17].

It is alleged in reply, that a church of orthodox Jewish christians, distinct both from Nazarenes and Ebionites, is a thing unknown to ecclesiastical antiquity; that Nazarenes was a title of contempt applied by unbelieving Jews to christians in general, and to those of their own nation in particular[18]; that Ebionites was the

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[17] See Huet. in Origen. Comment. not. p. 74. Mosheim de Reb. Christ. ante Constant. Sæc. ii. § 39. Horsley against Priestley, Lett. 6. Grotius and Vossius thought that the Nazarenes coincided with that sect of Ebionites which acknowledged the miraculous conception. Grot. on Matt. i. 8. See Huet. ibid. Dr. Horsley, however, is constrained to admit, upon the authority of a passage cited by Dr. Priestley in his second set of Letters, that Epiphanius charges the Nazarenes as erring with the Ebionites in their opinion concerning the person of Christ. But as Joannes Damascenus, in his book De Hær. expressly says, that the Nazarenes confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, the learned writer still charitably pleads for the orthodoxy of the sect. Dr. Horsley's Tracts, p. 144, note.

[18] "Ipso nomine nos Judæi Nazarenos appellant per eum." Tertull. adv. Marcion. p. 418.—See also Agobardi, Opp. p. 63. This seems to be Jerome's meaning in the expression "quos

title by which the body of Jewish believers was distinguished by Gentile christians till the time of Epiphanius, who is the first writer that attempts, though unsuccessfully, to make a distinction between the Ebionites and the Nazarenes [19]; and that from the similarity, or even identity, of their doctrine concerning the person of Christ; from their mutual adherence to the rites of Moses; and, above all, from their agreement in using the Hebrew gospel of Matthew only, it is highly probable, and with very few exceptions only it is agreed among the learned, that the Ebionites and Nazarenes were the same sect, or that they varied with very few and slight shades of difference [20].

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vulgo Nazaræos nuncupant," cited by Dr. Priestley, vol. iii. p. 171; and in his controversy with Dr. Horsley. *q. d.* What we call Ebionites are the same with those Minei, or sectaries, among the Jews, *whom they commonly call* Nazarenes.

[19] This controversy concerning the testimony of Epiphanius was carried on with great animation between Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley, till the former was constrained to concede the point, though with a very ill grace, in the manner stated in the last note but one.

[20] See Jones on the Canon, vol. i. p. 385—387. This learned writer without hesitation affirms the Nazarenes and Ebionites to have been the same. Huet, and after him Dr. Horsley, contend that they were different, because Epiphanius, Hær. xxix. § 7, says, "I do not know whether, like Cerinthus and Merinthus, they believe Christ to be a mere man, or whether, as the

As a further objection to the testimony of Origen, it has been stated by Mosheim, and after him by Dr. Horsley, that after the destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian, who forbad the Jews from coming within sight of the place, and who founded a colony in the vicinity, to which he gave the name of Ælia, the great body of orthodox Jewish believers, who had hitherto observed the rites of Moses, at once abandoned these rites, and resorted in great numbers to the new city, in order to participate in the privileges of the Ælian colony; that they joined the church of Gentile christians which was formed there; that Origen could not have been ignorant of this circumstance; and consequently that his account of the Hebrew christians must have been a wilful falsehood.

This strange hypothesis of the sudden defection of a great body of people, and those people

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truth is, they maintain that he was born of the holy spirit and Mary." See Huet. Not. in Orig. p. 74. This hesitation of Epiphanius amounts, in Dr. Horsley's estimation, "to the unwilling confession of a base accuser," that the Nazarenes were believers in the divinity of Christ. See Horsley's Tracts, p. 26, and 144. The learned prelate, however, in the very same page, is obliged to make an "unwilling confession" of his own error. Dr. Priestley has stated the argument at length, and very satisfactorily, in Hist. of Early Opinions, book iii. chap. 8.

Jews, from the customs of their ancestors, which had been held sacred for more than sixteen centuries, and of their instantaneous intimate union with a community of people whom they had always been accustomed to shun with horror, and to whose language they must have been entire strangers[21], is so incredible in itself, so contradictory to every known principle of the human mind, so unsupported by authority from ecclesiastical writers, so repugnant to historic evidence, and involves so unjust and cruel an aspersion upon one of the most unblemished characters of christian antiquity, that it will not bear a moment's examination; and the very statement of the case carries its own confutation[22].

It being thus established by competent evi-

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[21] Adrian's colony probably consisted of Greeks; and Sulpitius Severus says "that Mark, a Gentile, was then appointed bishop at Jerusalem." Hist. p. 245.

[22] This curious fabric of a church at Ælia of orthodox Hebrew christians, who had abandoned the ceremonies of the Law, rests solely upon the affirmation of Mosheim, supported by that of Dr. Horsley, but destitute of every shadow of support from christian antiquity. This, however, being the principal, and almost the only important topic of discussion between Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley, a brief review of this famous controversy will be given in the Appendix to this Section.

dence, that the great body of Jewish christians at the end of the second century were believers in the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, and this testimony remaining wholly uncontradicted, there being no proof whatever that any church of orthodox Jews ever existed; it follows by direct consequence that the Jewish church must have been Unitarian from the very beginning: for a change so great as that from believing the deity of Christ to the belief that he was a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, could not have taken place in so short a time; and if it had happened, it must have occasioned much violent controversy, of which some notice could not but have been taken by the historians of the church. But no such controversy is upon record, therefore it never existed. The inference clearly follows, that the first Jewish converts believed, and consequently that the first christian missionaries taught, that the Father was the only true God, and the proper object of worship, and that Jesus Christ was a mere human being, the faithful servant and honoured messenger of God [23].

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[23] Dr. Priestley, ibid. p. 210. Dr. Priestley says, that in the whole course of his reading he never met with the mention of

The direct evidence of the Unitarianism of the great body of Gentile christians, even as low down as the Council of Nice, is, if possible, still more clear and satisfactory than that of the Jewish believers. In the first rank is Origen. "There are some," says this learned writer in his Commentary upon John, "who participate of 'the Word that was in the beginning, the Word that was with God, and the Word that was God;'—but there are others who 'know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified:' 'the Word that was flesh.' Thinking that it is the whole doctrine of the Word, they only know Christ according to the flesh. SUCH IS THE MULTITUDE OF THOSE WHO ARE REPUTED AS BELIEVERS[24]." And again, "The multitudes, *τα πληθη*, of believers are instructed in the shadow of the Word, and not in the true Word of God[25]."

Tertullian's testimony is most explicit and

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more than one orthodox Jewish christian; his name was Joseph. Epiphanius says, he met with him at Scythopolis, where all the rest of the inhabitants were Arians. Page 189.

[24] "*τουτο δε εστι το πληθος των πεπιστευκεναι νομιζομενων.*" Comment. in Joh. v. 2. p. 49.

[25] Comment. ibid. p. 52. See also p. 9; and Priestley, ibid. p. 262.

unequivocal. "The simple, or rather the well-meaning, not to say the unwise and unlearned, WHO ALWAYS FORM THE MAJORITY OF BELIEVERS, since the very rule of faith transfers them from the many gods of the world to the one true God, not understanding that the one God is indeed to be believed, but with his own œconomy, (*i. e.* distribution into three persons,) are startled at the œconomy. They presume that the number and arrangement of the trinity is a division of the unity. They therefore hold out that two, or even three gods are taught by us: but they assume that they are the worshipers of one God. WE, say they, HOLD THE MONARCHY. Even the Latin clowns shout so loudly for the MONARCHY, that you would suppose they understood it as well as they pronounce it. But the Latins learn to shout for the monarchy, and even the Greeks themselves are unwilling to understand the œconomy[26]."

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[26] "Simplices enim quippe, ne dixerim imprudentes et idiotæ, QUÆ MAJOR SEMPER CREDENTIUM PARS EST, quoniam et ipsa regula fidei a pluribus diis seculi, ad unicum et deum verum transfert: non intelligentes unicum quidem sed cum sua œconomia esse credendum, expavescunt ad œconomiam. Numerum et dispositionem trinitatis, divisionem præsumunt unitatis...Itaque duos vel tres jactitant a nobis prædicari, se vero unius Dei cultores præsumunt...Monarchiam, inquiunt, tenemus. Et ita sonum vo-

This remarkable testimony of Tertullian to the zealous Unitarianism of the majority of believers, never has been invalidated, and never can. It is the reluctant testimony of an unwilling witness, extorted from him by the notoriety of the fact, the force of which he is anxious to diminish as far as in his power, not by denying the numbers, but by disparaging the understandings of the Unitarians. With this the argument has nothing to do. The fact is, that in the time of Tertullian, at the end of the second century, as far as that learned writer's knowledge extended, the *major pars credentium*, 'the majority of believers,' shuddered (expavescunt) at the doctrine of the trinity, as an infringement of the apostolic faith, and as introducing the worship of three Gods. And to express their abhorrence of the new philosophic doctrines, both Greeks and Latins zealously and loudly proclaimed their attachment to the great doctrine of the divine unity, or, as they very properly expressed it, of the Monarchy,

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caliter exprimunt etiam Latini, etiam opici, ut putes illos tam bene intelligere monarchiam, quam enunciant. Sed monarchiam sonare student Latini, œconomiam intelligere nolunt etiam Græci." Tertull. ad Prax. sect. iii. p. 502. Priestley, ibid. p. 265.

the sole, undivided, unrivalled government of God. All this Tertullian tells us, and all this Tertullian knew. His expressions plainly indicate that he must have been not unfrequently the distressed and mortified witness of the unpopularity of the Trinitarian doctrine, and of the clamorous and triumphant zeal of the Unitarian crowd.

The manner in which Dr. Horsley attempts to evade this clear and decisive testimony of Tertullian is pitiable in the extreme. He translates the passage thus: "Simple persons (not to call them ignorant and idiots), who always make the majority of believers, because the rule of faith carries us away from the many gods of the heathen to the one true God,—startle at the œconomy," &c. The impropriety of rendering "idiotæ," *idiots*, the Archdeacon certainly knew, nor, to say the truth, does he lay much stress upon the word. But his remarks and comment upon the passage are most extraordinary. He first observes, in direct contradiction to the plainest fact, "that Tertullian alleges that what credit the Unitarian doctrine obtained was *only* with the illiterate, nor with *all* the illiterate, but with those *only*, who were ignorant and stupid in the extreme."

The learned writer must surely have supposed his readers to be bereft of common understanding; especially when he presumes to add the following most extraordinary observation: "To PRECLUDE THE PLEA OF NUMBERS," says he, "Tertullian remarks that the illiterate will always make *the majority* of believers." How being the *majority* can preclude the *plea of numbers*, is beyond a plain man's understanding to comprehend. The learned writer then proceeds to exhibit an exposition of Tertullian's very clear and intelligible language. Tertullian says, "Simple persons, not to say ignorant and idiots, who always make the majority of believers," &c. This is the archdeacon's own translation. His exposition follows. "SOME simple people take alarm at the notion of a plurality of persons in the unity of the Godhead. Simple people did I say? I should have said ignorant and dull. When it is considered that persons of mean endowments must always be the majority of a body collected as the church is, from all ranks of men, it were no wonder that the followers of the Unitarian preachers were more numerous than they really are." "It is no testimony," adds the learned dignitary, "to the popularity of

your favourite opinions. It is a charge of ignorance against your party; of such ignorance as would invalidate the plea of numbers if it were set up." That a person of talents and learning, who had a character to lose, should hazard such an assertion as this in the teeth of his own translation of Tertullian's words is truly extraordinary. But what must that cause be which needs such a method of defence[97]?

Athanasius, in his Treatise against Paul of Samosata, a celebrated Unitarian, says, "It grieves even now those who stand up for the holy faith, that the multitude, τους πολλους, and especially those of low understanding, should

[97] See Horsley's Tracts, Lett. ix. p. 175. Dr. Priestley, in his Reply, expresses his astonishment at the unwarrantable liberty which Dr. Horsley had taken in the limitation which he gives to the indefinite language of Tertullian. This he justly calls "a gross misrepresentation," and adds, "I really wonder at your assurance in this." He afterwards accuses his learned adversary of ignorance or misrepresentation in translating "idiotæ," *idiots*, and asks him "in what lexicon, ordinary or extraordinary, he finds this sense of the word." See Dr. Priestley's Second Letters, p. 62, 63. Upon this verbal error, which did not materially affect the argument, it was needless for Dr. Priestley to have dilated so much. Dr. Horsley saw his advantage; and he was too dexterous a disputant not to avail himself of the opportunity which Dr. Priestley gave him by his loud and reiterated complaints upon this subject, of diverting the attention of the reader

be infected with these blasphemies." "This," Dr. Priestley observes, "is, like that of Tertullian, the language of complaint: and it is not the doctrine of Arius, but that of Paulus Samosatensis, that is here complained of[28]."

From this induction it appears that the great body of unlearned christians continued to hold Unitarian principles not only to the time of Origen and Tertullian, but even to that of Athanasius and Jerome, after the Council of Nice. But if this fact be proved, it is a strong presumption that Unitarianism was the doctrine of the first christians, and also, of the apostles and first teachers of christianity. For what they taught all would at first believe,

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from the main question, his gross misrepresentation of Tertullian, by a laboured defence of himself from this trifling charge; and to this end he takes the pains to write a long dissertation at the end of his volume of Tracts to prove that "idiota" may be rendered *idiot*. And in this way he contrives to leave an impression upon the minds of superficial readers that he has gained an advantage over Dr. Priestley even in this clear and unequivocal passage from Tertullian.

[28] See Athanasii Opp. vol. i. p. 591. Dr. Priestley, ibid. p. 269. Jerome is also supposed to allude to the Unitarians when he says that "simple believers, *simplices credentium*, did not understand the Scriptures according to their majesty. And that to them the ground of the people of God brought forth hay, as to the heretics it produced thorns." Hieron. Opp. vol. iv. p. 118. Priestley, ibid. p. 270.

and the unlearned would be the last to change. Speculative persons are always the first to begin an alteration in public opinion. If the public opinion is right, speculative men are the first who introduce error: if it be wrong, they are the first to reform and correct it. The change in the mass of the unlearned is gradual and slow: but generally, in process of time, it follows the direction of the learned. What is now the popular doctrine was once confined to the philosophers, and made its way by very slow degrees, and with great difficulty, among the common people. The corruptions of christianity were introduced by the learned and inquisitive. And by the learned and inquisitive the reformation was begun. By persons of this description it is still carried on, and is visibly, though slowly, advancing in opposition to the clamours of the ignorant, and to the artifice or violence of the interested. That truth by its native energy, aided by time, will eventually prevail, there can be no reasonable doubt: and when it has once re-established its glorious empire, there is no ground to apprehend that the age of darkness will return again. The prejudices which now obstruct its progress will then all operate in its favour: while the uni-

versal diffusion of knowledge, and the continually accelerated progress of human improvement, will oppose an insurmountable and eternal bar to the return of those gross errors and abominations which have for so many centuries been the disgrace of reason, and the bane of christianity.

APPENDIX TO SECT. XII.

ABSTRACT OF THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN DR. PRIESTLEY AND DR. HORSLEY CONCERNING THE EXISTENCE OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF HEBREW CHRISTIANS AT ÆLIA, WHO HAD DEPARTED FROM THE JEWISH RITUAL.

DR. PRIESTLEY having asserted upon the authority of Origen, that "the Jews who believed in Jesus were called Ebionites; that these Ebionites were of two sorts, one of them believing the miraculous conception, the other not, but all of them considering Christ as a mere man[1]",—

Dr. Horsley in reply, after endeavouring to show that Origen's words might be interpreted differently, proceeds in a very triumphant tone to remark, "Let his words be taken as you understand them.——I shall take what you may think a bold step. I shall tax the veracity of your witness —of this Origen. I shall tell you that whatever may be the general credit of his character, yet in this business the particulars of his deposition are to be little regarded, when he sets out with the allegation of a *notorious falsehood*. He alleges of the Hebrew christians in general, that they had not renounced the Mosaic law. The assertion served him for an answer to the invective which Celsus had put in the mouth of a Jew against the converted Jews, as deserters of the laws and customs of their ancestors. The answer was not the worse for wanting truth, if his heathen antagonist

[1] Priestley's Lett. to Horsley, p. 18.

was not sufficiently informed in the true distinctions of christian sects, to detect the falsehood....THE FACT IS, that after the demolition of Jerusalem by Adrian, the majority of the Hebrew christians, who must have passed for Jews with the Roman magistrates, had they continued to adhere to the Mosaic law, which to this time they had observed more from habit than from any principle of conscience, made no scruple to renounce it, that they might be qualified to partake in the valuable privileges of the Ælian colony, from which Jews were excluded. Having thus divested themselves of the form of Judaism, which to that time they had borne, they removed from Pella and other towns to which they had retired, and settled in great numbers at Ælia. The few who retained a superstitious veneration for their law, remained in the north of Galilee, where they were joined perhaps by new fugitives of the same weak character from Palestine. And this was the beginning of the sect of the Nazarenes. But from this time, whatever Origen may pretend to serve a purpose, the majority of the Hebrew christians forsook their law, and lived in communion with the Gentile bishops of the new-modelled church at Jerusalem. All this I affirm with the less hesitation, being *supported* by the authority of Mosheim. From whom indeed I first learned to rate the testimony of Origen in this particular question at its true value[2]."

One would conclude from the manner in which Dr. Horsley appeals to the testimony of Mosheim, that, having first, from his own extensive researches into ecclesiastical history, made this notable discovery of a Jewish church at Ælia, he was confirmed in his judgement by finding that Mosheim had also made the same discovery. But the truth is, that

[2] Horsley's Tracts, p. 156. I quote from the Collection of Tracts published by the Bishop of St. David's, 1789.

the learned dignitary, placing implicit confidence in Mosheim's testimony, having borrowed all the circumstances related by that celebrated historian, and mixed up a little of his own, has stated with great parade, and as incontrovertible fact, a narrative most improbable in itself, and utterly destitute of foundation in ecclesiastical antiquity.

Dr. Priestley, astonished beyond measure at a discovery so perfectly new to him, and so contrary to every thing which he had himself met with in his laborious researches, indignant likewise at the outrageous attack upon the unsullied character of the illustrious Origen, immediately, with his accustomed ardour, sets himself to examine the evidence of this extraordinary narrative. The only authority referred to by the learned archdeacon was a book not very commonly to be met with in England, Mosheim de Reb. Christianorum ante Constantinum. This book not being at that time in Dr. Priestley's possession, he looked into Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, in which it appears that the learned author expresses himself with much greater caution than in his former work, being probably aware that his authorities would not bear him out in the facts, or rather, the conclusions which he had formerly stated[3]. Dr. Priestley, not being apprized of this difference

[3] The account given by Mosheim in his Ecclesiastical History, (cent. 2. part ii. ch. v.) is as follows: "When the Emperor Adrian had razed Jerusalem, entirely destroyed even its very foundations, and enacted laws of the severest kind against the whole body of the Jewish people, the greatest part of the Christians who lived in Palestine, to prevent their being confounded with the Jews, abandoned entirely the Mosaic rites, and chose a bishop named Mark, a foreigner by nation, and consequently an alien from the commonwealth of Israel. This step was highly shocking to those whose attachment to the Mosaic rites was violent and invincible: and such was the case of many. These, therefore, separated themselves from their brethren, and founded at Pera and in the neighbouring parts particular assemblies, in which the law of Moses maintained its primitive dignity, authority, and lustre." See Dr. Maclaine's Translation, vol. i. p. 212.

in the two works of Mosheim, concluded rather hastily, that the additional circumstances originated in the exuberant invention of the archdeacon.

"Struck," says he, "with this extraordinary narration of a transaction of ancient times, for which you refer to no authority besides that of Mosheim, I looked into him: but, even there I do not find all the particulars that you mention. He says *nothing* of the Jewish christians having observed their laws more from habit than from any principle of conscience; *nothing* of their making no scruple to renounce their law in order to partake in the privileges of the Ælian colony; *nothing* of any Jewish christians removing from Pella, and settling at Ælia; *nothing* of the retiring of the rest to the north of Galilee; or of this new origin of the Nazarenes there. For all these particulars therefore, learned Sir, you must have some other authority, *in petto*, besides that of Mosheim, and you ought to have produced it." He then proceeds to state how improbable it was that any great body of men, much less Jews, should suddenly change their opinions, customs, and habits. "You might just as well suppose," says Dr. P. "that all the Jews in Jerusalem began to speak Greek, as well as abandoned their ancient customs, in order to enjoy the privileges of the Ælian colony. And you would have this to allege in your favour, that from that time the bishops of Jerusalem were all Greeks, and the public offices were no doubt performed in the Greek language[4]."

Dr. Priestley proceeds to observe, that the words of Sulpitius Severus, a writer of the fourth century, to which Mosheim refers, by no means support his or Dr. Horsley's narrative. He only says, that "because the christians were thought to consist chiefly of Jews, Adrian ordered a cohort

[4] Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's, Lett. 4.

of soldiers to keep constant guard, and drive all Jews from any access to Jerusalem: which was of service to the christian faith: for at that time they almost all believed Christ to be God, but with the observance of the law: the Lord so disposing it, that the servitude of the law should be removed from the liberty of the faith and the church. Then was Mark the first bishop of the Gentiles at Jerusalem[5]." The authority cited by Mosheim being so little relevant to his purpose, Dr. Priestley afterwards consulted Eusebius and other ancient writers, who, though they give an account of the expulsion of the Jews, say not one word of the Jewish christians abandoning the Mosaic ritual. And he concludes with Tillemont and Fleury, that the christian Jews were expelled equally with the rest, and that the church which was formed at Ælia consisted wholly of Gentiles. He expresses great indignation at the unfounded charge against Origen's character; and ends his letter with the severe remark, "unless you can make a better apology for yourself than I am able to suggest, you will be considered by impartial persons as a *falsifier of history*, and a defamer of the character of the dead, in order to serve your purpose."

The learned dignitary, who, to say the truth, was innocent of the charge alleged, who was misled by the great authority of Mosheim, and who really meant nothing more than the common *ruse de guerre* of passing off Mosheim's discoveries for his own, probably presuming upon security from detection by the scarcity of the book, deeply resented and vehemently repelled Dr. Priestley's unfounded accusation. In the second chapter of his Remarks upon Dr. Priestley's Second Letters, after laying in the prudent precaution, that "whoever attempts to make out a consistent story from ancient writers, will find himself under a necessity of

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5 Sulpit. Sever. Hist. Sac. lib. ii. c. 31. Dr. Priestley, ibid. p. 41.

helping out their broken accounts by his own conjectures," he proceeds to the humble confession, that he had in fact advanced nothing but what he had borrowed from Mosheim. And not knowing at the time that his opponent had consulted the wrong reference, for, in truth, Dr. Priestley had not acknowledged it, Dr. Horsley, with much plausibility, retaliates the charge of wilful misrepresentation upon his adversary. "If he opened Mosheim in the place to which I referred," says our indignant respondent, "*he must know* that I have added no circumstances to Mosheim's account but what every one must add in his own imagination. *He must know* that these circumstances in particular, which he is pleased to mention among my additions, are affirmed by Mosheim. The conflux of Hebrew christians to Ælia; the motive which induced the majority to give up their ancient customs, namely, the desire of sharing in the privileges of the Ælian colony; and the retreat of those who could not give their ancient customs up to remote corners of the country: *these were Mosheim's assertions before they were mine:* and Dr. Priestley either knows this, or pretending to separate Mosheim's account from my additions, he hath not taken the trouble to examine what is mine and what is Mosheim's."

So it is that the truth comes out between these learned polemics. Dr. Horsley, after having peremptorily stated that "THE FACT IS SO, which I affirm with the less hesitation, being SUPPORTED by the authority of Mosheim," is now reduced to the humiliating acknowledgement that he had advanced nothing but what he had borrowed from Mosheim. And Dr. Priestley having consulted a wrong reference, unjustly taxes the venerable archdeacon with being a bold falsifier of history, and defamer of the dead, when he was in fact nothing more than the humble, and we may cha-

ritably hope, the ignorant plagiary of the falsehood and defamation of another.

The archdeacon, however, was sufficiently sensible that in the estimation even of willing judges, his justification of himself from the charge of Dr. Priestley would not entirely acquit him from that of adopting implicitly the errors of Mosheim: Or, as he himself correctly expresses it, p. 364, having "related upon the authority of Mosheim, what Mosheim relates upon none." He very properly, therefore, proceeds to study ecclesiastical history for himself; and after eighteen months' hard labour, (p. 410,) he at length produces the following *new* and most *satisfactory* demonstration of the existence of this famous church of orthodox Hebrew christians at Ælia, who had abandoned the Mosaic ritual.

First, the learned dignitary states in form six distinct propositions (p. 364); the first three of which are undisputed facts, and the three last, gratuitous assumptions. The first asserts the existence of a Hebrew church of the circumcision at Jerusalem or Pella, "till the dispersion of the Jews by Adrian."—2. That, "upon this event a christian church arose at Ælia."—3. "This was a Greek church governed by bishops of the uncircumcision." All these were allowed facts.—4. The fourth proposition assumes, that "the observation of the Mosaic law by the primitive church of Jerusalem was a matter of mere habit and national prejudice, not of conscience. A matter of conscience it could not be, because of the decree of the apostolical college, and the writings of Paul"...."and the notion that Paul could be mistaken in this point, is an impiety which I cannot impute to our holy brethren, the saints of the primitive church of Jerusalem." It did not, it seems, occur to the venerable archdeacon that the apostolic decree related wholly to the converted Gentiles; that St. Paul bears his

testimony only against the imposition of the Mosaic ritual upon proselytes from heathenism; and that at any rate, "our holy brethren, the saints of Jerusalem," are known to have disregarded the writings of Paul, because he spoke slightingly of the obligation of the law.—5. That in these "good christians, motives of worldly interest, which would not overcome conscience, would overcome mere habit."—And 6. "that a desire of partaking in the privileges of the Ælian colony would be a prevailing motive with the Hebrew christians to lay aside their ancient customs." "These things," says the learned archdeacon, "I TAKE FOR GRANTED." And these things the German professor had taken for granted before him in that long note to his Ante-Constantine history, which is the grand store-house from whence the English Theologian derives all his knowledge of the Ælian church.

But as the profound Editor of the Works of Newton was well apprized that taking things for granted, though the most easy, is not always the most satisfactory mode of proof, he now proceeds to state his direct evidence of the origin of his favourite church. And judiciously passing over with very slight notice the fore-cited passage of Sulpitius Severus, which passage, however, is the principal mine from which Mosheim draws his precious discoveries, the archdeacon hints at the testimony of Orosius, a historian of the fifth century, who says that "the Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem, the freedom of the city being granted to Christians only." This testimony, however, is very properly dismissed, as little more than "a feather in the scale," p. 367; and the learned writer advances to his Seventh proposition, p. 373, which affirms,

7. "That a body of orthodox christians of the Hebrews, were actually existing in the world much later than the time of Adrian."

Passing by the testimony of Origen, whom he had before denounced as the asserter of a notorious falsehood, the venerable dignitary rests the whole proof of his proposition upon the authority of Jerome. This learned father, in his commentary upon Isaiah, relates two expositions of chap. ix. 1; of which expositions he ascribes the one to the *Hebrews believing in Christ*, the other to the *Nazarenes*. A critic of less acumen than the Archdeacon of St. Alban's would have been at a loss to discover any proof of his seventh proposition, and much more of the marvellous account of the sudden revolution in the Hebrew church in the reign of Adrian, and of their settlement at Ælia, in these few words from the Commentary of Jerome. But Dr. Horsley was not a scholar of the vulgar class. He strenuously argues, p. 374, that the Hebrews described by Jerome as believing in Christ, must have been orthodox believers. "For this description of them," says he, "without any thing to distinguish their belief from the common belief of the church, without any note of its error or imperfection, is a plain character of complete orthodoxy." Also, "the distinction of them from the Nazarenes, made by St. Jerome, is a plain proof that they were not observers of the Mosaic law."

Dr. Priestley in his reply, (Third Letters, p. 25,) producing the whole passage from Jerome, has made it appear probable that the Nazarenes, and the Hebrews believing in Christ, were the same persons; that Jerome only meant to diversify his phraseology, and that the interpretations which the archdeacon represents as different, are in effect the same. But let this pass. *We give him Jerome*[6]. We will admit, even upon this slender evidence, and the archdeacon's arbi-

[6] "I give him Origen." Horsley's Tracts, p. 374.

trary interpretation, in defiance of all probability, and in contradiction to the whole tenor of history, that in the age of Jerome, placed by Lardner in A. D. 392, there existed a considerable body of orthodox Hebrew christians, who had abandoned the customs of their forefathers. But how does this prove that 250 years before, the majority of Hebrew christians had suddenly, and at once, deserted the ritual of Moses in order to enjoy the privileges of the Ælian colony? This great difficulty did not escape the notice of the shrewd polemic. And the solution of it is so appropriate, and so truly characteristic of the learned writer's manner, that I will give it in his own words, p. 375. "If the orthodox christians of the Hebrews, actually existing somewhere in the world, from the reign of Adrian to the days of St. Jerome, were not members of the church of Ælia, dwelling at Ælia, and in the adjacent parts of Palestine, DR. PRIESTLEY, IF HE BE SO PLEASED, MAY SEEK THEIR SETTLEMENT."

Dr. Priestley, however, notwithstanding this most clear and satisfactory account of the origin of the orthodox church at Ælia, returns the bill with an indorsement of *ignoramus*: "Before you can show," says he, p. 28, "that this passage in Jerome is at all to your purpose, you must prove the three following things: First, that the Hebrews believing in Christ were different from the Nazarenes: secondly, that the former were completely orthodox: and thirdly, that those orthodox Jewish christians resided at Jerusalem. And it appears to me that not one of these suppositions is at all probable."

The venerable archdeacon, then advanced for his great merits to the bishoprick of St. David's, in condescension either to the infirmity, or to the *argument* of his opponent, in his Reply, abates a little of his lofty language; and in the last of the Disquisitions, annexed to the republication of his Tracts, p. 490, he admits "that St. Jerome's evidence goes *barely*

to the proof" of his seventh proposition, namely, 'that a body of orthodox christians of the Hebrews was actually existing in the world much later than the time of Adrian.' St. Jerome's evidence," says his Lordship, "is brought for the proof of this proposition SINGLY. And the existence of these orthodox Hebrew believers in the time of St. Jerome being thus proved by St. Jerome's evidence, the probability of the fact that they resided at Ælia, and that such a body had been settled at Ælia from the time of Adrian downwards, rests upon my SIX FORMER POSITIONS."

These positions have been already stated, and the attentive reader may perhaps recollect, though his Lordship has not reminded him of it, that these six propositions are introduced, p. 361, with the following remarkable words: "I TAKE FOR GRANTED THESE THINGS." And in order to impress the circumstance more strongly upon the reader's mind, after having stated the three first propositions, concerning which there was no dispute, he introduces the three following with a repetition of the same remark. For AGAIN, I TAKE FOR GRANTED.

The whole fabrick, then, of this famous church of orthodox Hebrew christians at Ælia, who abandoned at once the institutions of Moses in order to enjoy the privileges of the Ælian colony, rests solely upon the testimony of Jerome, more than 250 years afterwards, to this single fact, that in his time there were "Hebrews who believed in Christ." And by the learned writer's own frank and liberal concession, all the rest is TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

The venerable champion of the uncircumcised Hebrew church, having thus arranged his *invincible* arguments, proceeds, p. 376, with a most edifying and imposing gravity, and the most intrepid assurance, to state his grand conclusion. "Upon these foundations, which a stronger arm than Dr. Priestley's shall not be able to tear up, stands the

church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem."—Upon these foundations, would I say, let it stand. No force of arm can be necessary to overturn an edifice which the first passing breeze will sweep from the surface of the earth.

The difficulties of the learned dignitary do not however end here. Dr. Priestley's unfortunate mistake, in consulting the wrong book, involved his antagonist in another embarrassment, from which all his ingenuity in *helping out a broken story* has not been able to extricate him with credit.

Among other indisputable facts, and which the archdeacon alleges, p. 157, in order to confirm his charge against Origen, this is one; "that the majority of Hebrew christians," having renounced the Mosaic law, "that they might be qualified to partake in the valuable privileges of the Ælian colony," they "removed from Pella and other towns, to which they had retired, and settled in great numbers at Ælia." This migration of the Hebrew christians from Pella to Ælia is stated by Mosheim in his ante-Constantine history; but upon more mature reflection and better information, it had been omitted in the general Ecclesiastical History, which alone Dr. Priestley had consulted. This, therefore, is one of the facts which he suspects his reverend opponent to have forged, and of which he challenges him to produce a proof; which challenge gave rise to the abovementioned mortifying confession, this was "Mosheim's assertion before it was mine." But as Mosheim's bare assertion, though re-echoed in the pompous language of the archdeacon of St. Albans, would not be generally deemed sufficient, independently of evidence from antiquity, to impeach the hitherto spotless character of the great Origen, the archdeacon proceeds to cite the testimony of Epiphanius, referred to by Mosheim: a reference which if he had had the prudence or the good fortune to have consulted before he had published his affirmation, he would at least

have expressed himself with greater caution. "The Hebrew christians," says the learned dignitary, Tracts, p. 370, "AFTER ADRIAN'S SETTLEMENT OF THE ÆLIAN COLONY, returned from Pella, whither they had retired from the distresses of the war, to Ælia. It happens that this fact, of which Dr. Priestley does me the honour to make me the inventor, is asserted by Epiphanius." And in truth, Epiphanius, in the passage cited by the archdeacon, uses these very words: "The disciples of the disciples of the apostles had returned from Pella to Jerusalem, and taught there. For when the city was about to be taken by the Romans, all the disciples had been forewarned by an angel to leave the city. These went and dwelt in the above-mentioned Pella, beyond Jordan; but RETURNING AFTER THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM, worked miracles."

This is a plain, and, leaving the miracles out of the question, not an improbable narrative. What can be alleged in contradiction to this explicit testimony of Epiphanius? Nothing that I know of, save one or two little difficulties relating to the chronology of the event. These, indeed, the learned dignitary foresaw; and with wise precaution he earnestly deprecates "any cavils which ignorance or fraud (he might have added, or truth) may raise about the chronology of the return." THE FACT is, and the archdeacon does not deny it, that the desolation of Jerusalem, of which Epiphanius speaks, was that by Titus, A. D. 70, MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS BEFORE THE COLONY OF ÆLIA EXISTED[7]. "But this," says the learned dignitary, p. 371, "is a matter of no importance. It is suf-

[7] The Emperor Adrian began his reign in August, A. D. 117, and died in July, A. D. 138. The Jewish war broke out in the fourteenth year, and was finished in the eighteenth. It was in this period that Jerusalem was totally demolished, and the colony of Ælia was founded. Ælia was begun in A. D. 132. See Basnage.

ficient for my purpose that these returned christians were residing at Jerusalem, or more properly at Ælia, at the same time that Aquila resided there as overseer of the emperor's works." So then, we are now to believe, that these Hebrew christians, who "returned in great numbers to Ælia after Adrian's settlement of the Ælian colony," who abandoned the rites of Moses, and placed themselves under a Greek bishop, and worshiped in an unknown tongue, that they might be qualified to partake of the valuable privileges of the Ælian colony, were the very same persons who had quitted Jerusalem to avoid the calamities of the siege by Titus SIXTY YEARS before! Now if we allow that at the time of their retreat they were upon an average twenty years of age, they must have been fourscore at the time of their return. And it is really quite edifying to figure to one's self these illustrious Octogenaries, "our holy brethren, the saints of the primitive church of Jerusalem," upon the first intelligence of the good news, hasting away from Pella and the north of Galilee, where they had been passing threescore years in obscurity and tranquillity, and in heroic defiance of the most inveterate attachments and of the habits and prejudices of fourscore, abandoning at once the rites of their forefathers, and the forms, and even the language, of the devotions to which they had been ever accustomed, in order to obtain, What?—the valuable privileges and immunities of the Ælian colony! And how gratifying must it be to every pious mind to learn, upon the high authority of Epiphanius, that after all the fatigues and hazards of their journey, they were still in a flourishing state, teaching and working miracles with great effect, at the time when Aquila, who was converted by them, was superintendant of Adrian's works[8]!

[8] Ανέβαινας τῃ πίστει, και σημεια μεγαλα ἐργαζομενες ἰασεων και αλλων θαυματων. Epiph. de Pond. et Mens.

But here again, there is another little chronological stumbling-block, which it is necessary either to remove or to step over. Taking the account as it stands in Epiphanius, the only authority, such as it is, for the fact in question, this Aquila, who was converted by the miracles of the orthodox Hebrew christians, was employed by Adrian as overseer of the works at Jerusalem in the thirteenth year of his reign. But the Jewish war did not break out till the fourteenth year, and was terminated in the eighteenth; so that the Hebrew christians, with whom Aquila conversed, were those who were resident at Jerusalem *before* its desolation by Adrian, not those who, "*after* Adrian's settlement of the Ælian colony, returned from Pella," and abandoned the rites of Moses to enjoy the privileges of Ælia. His Lordship, however, when pressed with this objection by his acute opponent, after piteously complaining of the uncivil attempt to embarrass the argument with chronological difficulties, against which he had entered so earnest and necessary a *caveat*[9], proceeds in his usual way to *help out the broken story* by his own conjectures. "I maintain," says he, p. 371, note, "that there is no reason to believe that the Hebrew christians quietly settled at Ælia before the Jewish rebellion were included in Adrian's edict for the banishment of the Jews." From this it should seem, that "our holy brethren" never moved from the place of their abode during the war of Adrian; but prudently embracing the first opportunity of discarding the

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9 "Dr. Priestley has treated this testimony of Epiphanius just as I expected, and indeed predicted....the caution which I gave the public not to be abused by cavils about chronology is but too much justified by the event." Bishop Horsley's Tracts, p. 372, note.—A less sagacious disputant than the Bishop of St. Davids might naturally expect from so acute an opponent as Dr. Priestley, an attack in that quarter which he was conscious that he had left so much exposed.

Mosaic ritual, they were at once admitted to the privileges of the Ælian colony. His Lordship forgets, or at least he presumes that his readers will forget, that, upon the authority of Mosheim, he had before sent them all to Pella, and to the north of Galilee, till after the demolition of Jerusalem by Adrian; and that this is stated, p. 156, 157, as one of the indisputable facts in confirmation of the charge against Origen. Upon second thoughts, the learned prelate kindly consents to keep these aged and pious brethren at home, and only requires that, lest they should "pass for Jews with the Roman magistrates, they should renounce the Mosaic law." Whether the easy simplicity of the Roman magistrates was really imposed upon by the specious artifice of "our holy brethren," or whether their good nature, at the hazard of incurring the emperor's displeasure, winked at the pious fraud; or finally, since, by the testimony of the bishop's great authority, St. Epiphanius, miracles had not yet ceased in the Jerusalem church, whether their eyes might *not be holden so that they did not know them*, does not appear[10]. The bishop acknowledges, p. 366, that "no promise of any particular immunities was made to Jewish christians upon condition that they renounced the Jewish law." But presuming, which is not improbable, that the Hebrew christians had taken no part in the rebellion, he supposes that the emperor *might* distinguish between rebels and good subjects. He then takes for granted, that the emperor *did* make this distinction; and assumes, without a

[10] It might have been deemed officious in Dr. Priestley to have put the question, How were these holy and prudent brethren disposed of during the interval when "Jerusalem was no more," and while Ælia was building at another place? But, no doubt, his Lordship would have referred him to his former most ingenious and satisfactory reply, p. 375: "If they were not dwelling at Ælia, Dr. Priestley, if he be so pleased, may seek their settlement."

tittle of authority from ecclesiastical antiquity, that they abandoned the Mosaic institute, because, "if they had not discarded the Jewish rites, they might have been mistaken for Jews," and been debarred the immunities of the Ælian colony. In this forlorn and deplorable condition, resting wholly upon gratuitous assumption, unsupported by history, and contradicted by chronology, is this learned prelate constrained finally to leave this his favourite church. Still, however, he is unwilling absolutely to give it up. "The disturbed foundations of the church of Ælia are," says he, p. 499, "again settled. I *could wish* to trust them to their own solidity to withstand any future attacks."

But though the right reverend polemic thus sued for peace, his active and determined adversary would neither desist from the contest, nor grant him quarter. After having stated in his Letters to the Lord Bishop of St. Davids, p. 53, "that all the accounts of the destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian are absolutely inconsistent with the supposition of any such church;" that, "they all say that no Jew, without making any exception in favour of christian Jews, was allowed to remain in the place, and they expressly speak of the new church as consisting wholly of Gentiles, who made use of the Greek language;" and appealing once more to the concurring opinion of Fleury and Tillemont, he adds, "to this mass of evidence from the clearest facts and the strongest probabilities, your Lordship opposes a mere idle story picked up by Epiphanius, of Aquila being appointed by Adrian to superintend the works at Jerusalem, and being converted to christianity;" and he reminds the bishop that, "according to Epiphanius, this must have happened before the war begun." "Your Lordship," he concludes, "may well say that I have embarrassed your argument with chronological difficulties; and when chronology is against a man, he is naturally against chronology."

In reply to the bishop's concluding remark, Dr. Priestley says, p. 57, "My Lord, in humble imitation of your Lordship's style, I will say, the foundations of your church of Trinitarian Jews at Jerusalem, after the time of Adrian, are again, and I will venture to say for ever, overturned: and a church, the foundations of which were attempted to be laid on the grossest calumny, and on the ruins of the fairest character that christian history has to exhibit, would not expect any better fate. And it has fallen where it ought to have done, on the head of the architect." He adds, "If your Lordship should make a fresh attempt to rebuild this favourite church, I hope you will lay its foundations deeper than on an idle story of Epiphanius.—Also condescend to give some small degree of attention to the humble subject of chronology. Otherwise, how pompously and magisterially soever your Lordship may write, a plain tale will be sufficient to put you down." Dr. Priestley concludes with a spirited challenge to the newly-created bishop to resume the controversy. "Come forth then again, my Lord, and to all your powers of language be pleased to add those of argument. To use your own high platonic language, Come forth with the full projection of all your energies, and, if possible, overwhelm me at once."

To this animated challenge the right reverend adversary made no reply. The oracle was silent. The warfare was accomplished. The prize was won. And both the contending parties retired from the field equally well satisfied with the result of the conflict; Dr. Priestley, with his VICTORY, and Dr. Horsley, with his MITRE.

NOTE.

The other questions which were agitated by these keen and learned polemics were of very subordinate importance. The venerable archdeacon having pledged himself to prove that the divinity of our Lord was the belief of the very first christians, appeals in his Eighth Letter, Tracts, p. 164, to a work of great antiquity, under the title of the Epistle of Barnabas, which, though it is admitted not to have been written by the companion of Paul, the learned writer contends to have been a production of the apostolic age, and addressed by a Hebrew christian to his Jewish brethren. From this epistle he cites the following passage: "The Lord submitted to suffer for our souls, although he be the Lord of the whole earth, unto whom he said the day before the world was finished, Let us make man after our image and likeness." He adds two or three other passages of the same import. He then remarks, that the writer mentions this doctrine "as an article of their common faith; he brings no arguments to prove it; he mentions it as occasion occurs, without showing any anxiety to inculcate it, or any apprehension that it would be denied or doubted." And he triumphantly concludes, "This, Sir, is the proof which I had to produce. It is so direct and full, that if this be laid in one scale, and your whole mass of evidence drawn from incidental and ambiguous allusions in the other, the latter will fly up and kick the beam."

To this argument Dr. Priestley replies in the second of his second series of Letters to Dr. Horsley, by reminding his antagonist of the doubts entertained by many learned men of the genuineness of this epistle, and of the certainty of numerous interpolations, and those such as respect the very subject in question. Adding, "I must see other evidence than this from Barnabas, before I can admit that the divinity or pre-existence of Christ was the belief of the apostolic age."

This reply sufficiently impeaches the testimony of the pseudo-Barnabas. But an answer still more satisfactory is supplied by the learned Jeremiah Jones, who was not, as Dr. Horsley states,

Tracts, p. 127, "the tutor of the venerable Lardner," but the relation and pupil of the very learned Samuel Jones of Tewkesbury, who was also the tutor of Maddox bishop of Worcester, Butler bishop of Durham, and Secker archbishop of Canterbury; to which catalogue we may add the name of a person who was fully their equal in literary celebrity, and, if not restrained by principles of conscience, had been equal in ecclesiastical dignity, the learned and pious Dr. Samuel Chandler, many years the able and admired pastor of the highly respectable presbyterian congregation of the Old Jewry. Jeremiah Jones, who, to the great loss of theological literature, died young, in the second volume of his admirable Treatise on the Canon of Scripture, republished a few years ago by the University of Oxford, part iii. ch. 37, after a very full and impartial inquiry into the subject, states it as his opinion, which he substantiates by abundant evidence, "that the epistle was written not by Barnabas, nor by any other Jew, but by some person who was originally a Pagan idolater; that it is an apocryphal book, and was never read in the churches till the time of Jerome; that it contains many assertions which are absolutely false, and a great number of trifling, silly, and idle things." And upon the whole he concludes, from its having been cited "only by Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen, that it was forged at Alexandria; and because there are so many pious frauds in it, that it was the forgery of some such person as corrupted the books of the Sybils, and that it was written about the middle of the second century." Such is the *direct*, *full*, and decisive evidence derived by the archdeacon from the testimony of Barnabas to the orthodoxy of the primitive Hebrew church. *We give him this Barnabas* [1].

I cannot conclude this long note without adding a word or two upon the subject of Origen's much-injured character. The archdeacon had charged this venerable man with "the allegation of a notorious falsehood," in asserting that the Hebrew christians in his time had not abandoned the law of

[1] "I shall tax the veracity of your witness—of *this* Origen." Horsley, p. 156.

their ancestors: Tracts, p. 156. Of this heavy charge he adduced the existence of his far-famed church at Ælia as a proof. But soon discovering that the foundations of this church were too weak even for its own support, and much more to bear the weight of this new and unprecedented attack upon the veracity of Origen, and being anxious to repel the severe retort of Dr. Priestley, that he was "a defamer of the dead," the learned dignitary applied himself with great industry to look out for some plausible confirmation of his criminatory allegation. And the success of his researches was worthy of the cause. Two passages only are produced by the archdeacon, Tracts, p. 350, to state which, in the reverend accuser's own translation, is to demonstrate the futility of the charge.

"In the second book of the Answer to Celsus, Origen says, It is my present purpose to evince Celsus's ignorance; who has made a Jew say to his countrymen, to Israelites believing in Christ, Upon what motive have you deserted the law of your ancestors?....And how confusedly does Celsus's Jew speak upon this subject, when he might have said MORE PLAUSIBLY, πιθανωτερον· SOME of you have relinquished the old customs upon pretence of expositions and allegories. *Some* again expounding, as you call it, spiritually, nevertheless observe the institutions of our ancestors. But *some*, not admitting these expositions, are willing to receive Jesus as the person foretold by the prophets, and to observe the law of Moses according to the ancient customs." "In these words," continues the archdeacon, "Origen confesses all that I have alleged of him. He confesses, in contradiction to his former assertion, that he knew of three sorts of Jews professing christianity....one of whom had relinquished the observance of the literal precept."

But where is this self-contradiction to be found? Celsus ignorantly charged ALL the Hebrew christians with having deserted the customs of their ancestors. Origen, who knew that few or none of them had done so, replies, that Celsus's Jew would have talked not more truly, but more PLAUSIBLY, more consistently with his assumed character, and more like the truth, if he had only said that *some* had relinquished their old customs, while the

majority adhered to them. But the bishop says in his laboured reply to Dr. Priestley's Defence of Origen, Tracts, Disq. v. "Plausibility and truth in this use of the word plausibility, are the very same thing." They might be so in his Lordship's vocabulary, but they are not so in common acceptation. To say that his Lordship's assertions are plausible, is very different from allowing that those assertions are true. Dr. Priestley, in the first of his third Series of Letters, supposes that Origen might allude to a few who had relinquished their ancient customs, though the majority had not. But this supposition, though not improbable, is by no means necessary to justify the character of Origen.

Another passage, upon which the archdeacon places his finger, ibid. p. 353, as substantiating his charge against Origen, is in the first book of the Reply to Celsus. Origen, defending the translation of Isa. vii. 14, "Behold a virgin shall conceive," alleges that the word *Alma*, which the LXX. translate 'virgin,' and others 'a young woman,' is put too, AS THEY SAY, in Deuteronomy, xxii. 23, 24, for 'a virgin.'"

The fact is, that in all our present copies the word *Alma*, עלמה, does not occur in Deuteronomy, but another word בתולה, which always signifies 'a virgin.' And the archdeacon charges Origen with prevarication for citing the text in this doubtful manner. "Was it unknown to the compiler of the Hexapla what the reading of the Hebrew text in his own times was? If he knew that it was what he would have it thought to be, why does he seem to assert it upon hearsay only? If he knew not, why did he not inform himself?"

In truth, it is difficult to say why Origen uses this indefinite phrase. His copy might differ from the modern ones, or his judgement might be doubtful, or he might possibly have forgotten at the instant what the exact reading was, and his copy might not be at hand for him to consult; but whether any or none of these suppositions be correct, surely no human being but the Archdeacon of St. Albans would have ventured upon such feeble grounds to have taxed the character of the great and venerable

Origen with notorious falsehood[2]. "What an appetite," says Dr. Priestley, "must a man have for calumny, who can seize upon such a circumstance as this to gratify it!" Third Series of Letters, p. 15.

In the fifth Disquisition annexed to his Collection of Tracts, Dr. Horsley, then Bishop of St. Davids, labours, but without success, to establish his impeachment of Origen's character upon the ground of these two passages, from his answer to Celsus; and having convicted Dr. Priestley of two or

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[2] Nor is it to be supposed that the archdeacon himself would have preferred so serious a charge upon such frivolous pretexts, had he not been completely misled by the visions of Mosheim. For had the fable of the Hebrew orthodox church at Ælia been true, Origen must have known it, as he resided for some time in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and he would in that case have merited the imputation of a want of veracity. But this ground being untenable, and the learned dignitary having alleged his accusation of the venerable Father in such broad and unqualified terms, he probably thought it necessary in vindication of his own character to search for other proofs of his charge against that of Origen: with what success the reader is now competent to judge.

The reader may now likewise form a just estimate of the truth of a curious observation in a late Quarterly Review, that "Dr. Priestley was regarded as a giant in theological controversy, till he was vanquished by a giant greater than himself" How far Bishop Horsley, conscious as he evidently was of the infirmity of his argument, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal under the pomp and colouring of his language, would have relished the equivocal compliment of the same Reviewers in their critique upon his posthumous sermons, that his principal forte was Theology, may not be so easily ascertained.

To the liberal and enlightened author of the masterly "Dissertation upon the Evangelical Sects," in the last Number of this Literary Journal, the Unitarians, in common with the rest of their non-conformist brethren, are under great obligation, for his manly and unequivocal avowal of the grand principles of religious liberty, and his indignant reprobation of persecution in every form. While the Unitarians can boast of their Lardners, Lindseys, Jebbs, Wakefields, and Tyrwhits, and many other names living and dead, whose claim to literary celebrity would not have been deemed equivocal had they imbibed their learning in royal colleges or national institutions, they can forgive the sarcasm of the worthy Reviewer that their doctrine "appeals to the vanity of the half-learned, and the pride of the

three trifling inaccuracies, he concludes with the following illiberal reflection: "This art, which Dr. Priestley is so apt to employ, of reducing an argument, by well-managed abridgements, to a form in which it may be capable of refutation, indicates so near a resemblance between the characters of Origen and his Hyperaspistes, in the worst part of Origen's, that perhaps I might not be altogether unjustifiable, were I to apply to the Squire the words which Mosheim so freely uses of the Knight; 'Ego huic testi, etiamsi jurato, qui tam manifesto fumos vendit, me non crediturum esse confirmo.'"

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half-reasoning." But they cannot suppress their astonishment that this able critic, who does not appear to be an enemy to revelation, should, in reply to a most judicious and important observation of the Barrister, "that Christ never required faith in his disciples, without first furnishing sufficient evidence to justify it," have ventured to affirm that the Barrister "makes this assertion in direct contradiction of many plain texts, and of the whole spirit of the whole gospels." We indeed have not so learned Christ.

The candid writer, allowing that Unitarianism is "the most harmless of all heresies," declares his opinion that "it never can become a popular doctrine." The writer of this note once entertained the same opinion; and that at a time when, from a conviction of the truth of the Unitarian doctrine, he thought it his duty to make an open profession of it. He has since learned from experience to place more confidence in the energy of Truth when proposed in a plain and undisguised form. If the critique was written by the respectable author to whom it is attributed by common rumour, he will permit the writer of this Note to lay claim to a more convenient station for observing the progress of Unitarianism, than the Reviewer, with all his acknowledged talents and resources, can possess in the "antres vast and desarts idle" of the North. The Unitarians do not complain of decreasing numbers and empty chapels. Their want is that of popular, enlightened, and faithful ministers to large and crowded auditories. And the philosophic Reviewer may, if he pleases, smile at the fond credulity of the writer while he avows his firm conviction, that the only effectual check which can be given to that torrent of absurdity and enthusiasm which threatens to overwhelm the country, and which excites just alarm in every considerate mind, is, not by opposing nonsense to nonsense, and fanaticism to fanaticism, but by the calm, dignified, and irresistible progress of reason, truth, and virtue; by the prevalence of Unitarian principles, of the Lancasterian system of education, and of a firm, temperate, and truly primitive discipline.

Dr. Priestley, disdaining to enter any further into the defence of Origen's character, in reply to the above calumnious insinuations of the bishop against himself, says, Fourth Series, p. 85, "To this conjunction of myself with Origen I heartily say, Amen. May my character be that of this great man with all its faults, and then it will be as far removed as I wish it to be from that of the present Bishop of St. Davids, whom I scruple not once more to call, as I have abundantly proved the truth of the accusation, a falsifier, though I believe not a wilful falsifier, of history, and a defamer of the character of the dead."

PART THE SECOND.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE VARIOUS OPINIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ENTERTAINED CONCERNING THE PERSON OF CHRIST, AND OF THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND OBJECTIONS AGAINST EACH.

SECTION I.

THE PROPER UNITARIAN SCHEME, OR THE DOCTRINE OF THE SIMPLE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE Unitarian doctrine is, that Jesus of Nazareth was a man constituted in all respects like other men, subject to the same infirmities, the same ignorance, prejudices, and frailties —descended from the family of David, the son of Joseph and Mary, though some indeed still adhere to the popular opinion of the

miraculous conception—that he was born in low circumstances, having no peculiar advantages of education or learning, but that he was a man of exemplary character,—and that in conformity to ancient prophecy, he was chosen and appointed by God to introduce a new moral dispensation into the world, the design of which was to abolish the Jewish œconomy, and to place believing Gentiles upon an equal ground of privilege and favour with the posterity of Abraham: in other words, he was authorized to reveal to all mankind, without distinction, the great doctrine of a future life, in which men shall be rewarded according to their works.

It does not appear that Jesus was at all conscious of the honour and dignity for which he was intended till after his baptism, when the Holy Spirit was communicated to him in a visible symbol, and when he was miraculously announced as the beloved Son of God, that is, as the great prophet or Messiah whom the Jews had been taught to expect; after which, in the course of his public ministry, he occasionally spoke of himself as the Son of Man and the Son of God.

After his baptism, it is generally believed by

the Unitarians, that he spent some time in the wilderness, where he was fully instructed in the nature of his mission, and invested with voluntary miraculous powers, which, by the visionary scene of his temptation, he was instructed to exercise, not for any personal advantage, but solely for the purposes of his mission. Many, however, conceive that Jesus never performed a miracle but when he was prompted to it by a divine impulse. It has been maintained by some learned men, that during the period of his residence in the wilderness Jesus was favoured with divine visions, in which, like the apostle Paul, (2 Cor. xii.) he apprehended himself to be transported into heaven; and that the language which he uses concerning his descent from heaven is to be explained by this hypothesis: but the generality of Unitarians interpret these expressions of his divine commission only, and the perfect knowledge with which he was favoured, above all other prophets, of the will of God concerning the moral state of men, and the new dispensation which he was appointed to introduce.

The Unitarians generally believe that Jesus, having exercised his public ministry for the space of a year, and perhaps a little more, suf-

fered death publicly upon the cross, not to appease the wrath of God, not as a satisfaction to divine justice, not to exhibit the evil of sin, nor in any sense whatever to make an atonement to God for it; for this doctrine in every sense, and according to every explanation, they explode as irrational, unscriptural, and derogatory from the divine perfections; but as a martyr to the truth, and as a necessary preliminary to his resurrection. And they hold that it was wisely ordered, to preclude cavils, that his death should be an event of great public notoriety, and inflicted by his enemies.

The Unitarians also believe that Jesus was raised to life by the power of God, agreeably to his own predictions, on the third day, and that by this event he not only confirmed the truth and divinity of his mission, but exhibited in his own person a pattern and a pledge of a resurrection to immortal life; for which reason he is called the first-born of the whole *new* creation, and the first-begotten from the dead.

The Unitarians further believe, that after having given sufficient proofs to his disciples, for forty days, of the truth of his resurrection, he was in a miraculous manner withdrawn from their society, a circumstance which is described

as an ascension into heaven; and that in a few days after this event, the holy spirit was communicated to his apostles in a visible symbol on the day of Pentecost, by which they were endued with the gift of speaking various languages which they had never learned, and were furnished with many other gifts and powers by which they were qualified to propagate the Gospel in the world, and to exhibit a most satisfactory and public proof of the resurrection of their master from the dead.

The Unitarians maintain, that Jesus and his apostles were supernaturally instructed as far as was necessary for the execution of their commission, that is, for the revelation and proof of the doctrine of eternal life, and that the favour of God extended to the Gentiles equally with the Jews; and that Jesus and his apostles, and others of the primitive believers, were occasionally inspired to foretel future events. But they believe that supernatural inspiration was limited to these cases alone; and that when Jesus or his apostles deliver opinions upon subjects unconnected with the object of their mission, such opinions, and their reasonings upon them, are to be received with the same attention and caution with those of other per-

sons in similar circumstances, of similar education, and with similar habits of thinking.

The Unitarians admit, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and especially the latter, contain authentic records of facts, and of divine interpositions; but they utterly deny the universal inspiration of the writers of those compositions, as a qualification to which indeed they make no pretension, and of which they offer no proof; and the assertion of which tends only to embarrass the evidences of revelation, and to give advantage to its enemies. And they judge of the genuineness, of the meaning, and of the credibility of these works, exactly in the same way as they judge of any other ancient writings.

Many of the Unitarians believe that Jesus continued to maintain, occasionally at least, some personal and sensible connexion with the church during the apostolic age, which he expressly promised to do (Matt. xxviii. 20); and in this way they account for the continuance of those miraculous gifts and powers which were exercised in his name while the apostles lived, and also for occasional personal appearances and interpositions which have never occurred since: but it is believed that he is now with-

drawn from all sensible intercourse with this world, though some have conjectured that he may still be actually present in it, and attentive to its concerns.

The Unitarians believe, that Christ is appointed to raise the dead and to judge the world. With regard to the former, it is believed that he will be the instrument of his Father's power. With respect to the latter, whether the declarations concerning it are to be understood literally or figuratively, whether Jesus will be personally invested with some high official character, or whether nothing more is intended than that the final states of men shall be awarded agreeably to the declarations of his Gospel, cannot, they think, at present be ascertained. Probably, as is usual with prophetic language, the event will be very different from what the literal sense of the words would lead us to expect. But whatever be the meaning of the declaration, the part which Jesus will bear in it will, they are confident, be no more than what may properly be allotted to a human being, (John v. 27;) and in the execution of which his apostles and disciples will, it is said, be associated with him. Matt. xix. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

The Unitarians, while they bow to the authority of Jesus as the great Prophet of the Most High, and receive with implicit submission whatever appears to them to have the sanction of divine authority; while they regard the character of Christ as the most complete and the most interesting that was ever exhibited to the world; while they feel themselves under indispensable obligation to obey the precepts of his Gospel, and, after his example, to diffuse to the utmost of their ability the knowledge of truth and the practice of virtue; disavow all those personal regards to Christ, and direct addresses to him, either of prayer or praise, which properly fall under the definition of religious worship, as unfounded in reason, unauthorized by Scripture, derogatory from the honour of the Supreme Being, the only proper object of religious homage, and as in a strict and proper sense polytheistical and idolatrous. And in this case, the Unitarians, so far from being conscious of any wilful derogation from the honour due to Christ, whom they acknowledge and venerate as their Lord and Master, are fully persuaded that they act in perfect conformity to his authority and example, and in a manner of which he would himself testify

the most entire approbation if he were to appear in person upon earth.

They who believe in the proper humanity of Jesus Christ claim the title of Unitarians, not only because custom, the arbiter of language, has ever since the Reformation annexed, and till very lately limited, the appellation to that denomination of christians, but more especially, because they conceive that they are almost the only body of christians who practically maintain the important doctrine of the divine Unity in its full and just extent, and who exclude every creature, without exception, from every degree of participation in those ATTRIBUTES, WORKS, and HONOURS, which reason and revelation ascribe and appropriate to the ONLY GOD.

The Unitarians think it superfluous to produce any arguments to prove that a person who is repeatedly called a man, who had every appearance of a human being, who was born, who grew, who lived, who conversed, who felt, who acted, who suffered, and who died like other men, who was universally believed to be a man by all who saw and conversed with him, and

was addressed and spoken of as a human being by all his contemporaries, whether friends or enemies, was really what he appeared and affirmed himself to be, truly and properly a man, and nothing more than a man. This is a fact which must be admitted without hesitation, unless the most unequivocal and decisive evidence can be produced to the contrary. And they think that a fact so astonishing, and so contrary to experience and analogy, as the incarnation of a superior spirit, is not to be received upon the authority of oblique hints, or of obscure, figurative, and ambiguous phraseology, but that it is reasonable to expect that the evidence of such a fact should be clear and decisive in proportion to its antecedent improbability.

Now the Unitarians profess, that after having carefully consulted and examined the Scriptures, they can find no such clear and satisfactory evidence. They observe, that there is no allusion at all to the supposed pre-existent state and superior nature of Jesus Christ, in three of the evangelists, or in the history of the Apostles' preaching, and of the first plantation of the Gospel contained in the Acts of the apostles; and that John is a very mystical writer; abounding in harsh metaphors and symbolical phrase-

ology, very different from the simplicity which characterizes the other evangelists. Nor can they discern any traces of that surprise and astonishment which must have seized the minds of the disciples and companions of Jesus when it was first revealed to them that the master with whom they had so frequently and familiarly conversed, was the Lord their Maker, or at least a great celestial spirit in a human shape.

The Unitarians also plead, that by a diligent investigation of the Scripture language, by examining the connexion in which particular phrases occur, by a careful comparison of different passages, and by making Scripture its own interpreter, it is not difficult to show that the few phrases which, in contradiction to the general current of the Sacred Writings, are supposed to teach the superior nature and pre-existent state of Christ, if such texts are genuine, may justly be understood, and, by the established rules of fair and liberal criticism, ought to be interpreted in a sense consistent with his proper humanity.

Particularly, they profess to prove that those passages in which Jesus represents himself as having descended from heaven, signify nothing more than the divine original of his doctrine:

that where he is represented as the maker of all things, the new creation only is intended, that is, the new state of things which he was commissioned to introduce into the moral world; and that the creation of natural objects is no where attributed to Christ. Also, that if the title *God* be ever applied to Christ in the New Testament (which some deny), it is only in the sense in which Moses is said to have been a god to Pharaoh, that is, as being invested with a divine commission, and a power of working miracles in proof of it. They also observe, that the same, or even stronger expressions are applied to christians in general than those from which the deity of Christ is usually inferred. They maintain that the creation and support of the natural world and its inhabitants is uniformly ascribed to God; and that there is no evidence whatever to prove that Christ was personally concerned in any of the former dispensations of God to mankind, either to the patriarchs or to the Jews, but that the contrary is explicitly and repeatedly asserted in the Scriptures.

The Unitarians maintain that those peculiar expressions, from which, what is called the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son is in-

ferred, may be clearly proved to signify nothing more than the superior dignity of his prophetical character as the promised Messiah, and the chief of the prophets of God.

They also remark, that the apostles, when speaking of Christ after his resurrection and ascension, use a kind of unqualified language concerning his person, which no Arian or Trinitarian would now adopt without much explanation and caution: such as, no doubt, the apostles themselves would have used, had they believed in the pre-existence or deity of Christ.

Lastly, it has been stated by Dr. Priestley with irresistible evidence, that the Jewish christians almost universally, and a very great majority of the Gentile christians in the two first centuries, were believers in the proper humanity of Jesus Christ; some admitting and others rejecting the circumstance of his miraculous conception: and these primitive believers, having received the christian doctrine from the apostles and their immediate successors, must have had the best means of interpreting that obscure phraseology which in later ages has been applied to the support of those unscriptural opinions with which the vanity of heathen philo-

sophy has corrupted and debased the purity and simplicity of the christian faith [1].

Against the Unitarian doctrine it is objected that our inquiries are to be directed not into the opinions of the early christians, whether converts from judaism or heathenism, for they were men fallible and prejudiced like ourselves, but into the natural and obvious meaning of the Scriptures;—that the Scriptures were written for the use of plain illiterate men, and are therefore to be understood in their most obvious and popular sense;—that, although it might not fall in with the design of every one of the sacred writers to discourse upon the pre-existence or divinity of Jesus Christ, nevertheless, this doctrine is taught in various passages

[1] See, upon this subject, Haynes on the Attributes of God. Lardner on the Logos. Cardale's True Doctrine concerning Christ. Lindsey's Apology and Sequel. Conversations on Christian Idolatry. Dr. Priestley's History of Corruptions of Christianity, History of Early Opinions, and Defences of Unitarianism. Cappe's Critical Remarks on Scripture, 2 vols. Simpson's Essays on the Language of Scripture. Belsham's Reply to Wilberforce, and Letters on Arianism. Dr. Carpenter's Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel. The Notes to the Improved Version of the New Testament are intended chiefly to exhibit the most approved interpretations of the Unitarian expositors.

of the New Testament in the clearest and most unambiguous language, such as cannot be wrested to any other meaning but by a mode of interpretation which would reduce every thing to uncertainty, and make all language useless;—that this great doctrine is taught not in one or two passages only, or left to be inferred from an equivocal expression here and there, but that it is expressly asserted in a great number of texts in the New Testament, and in a great variety of phraseology, and that it is frequently alluded to and reasoned upon as an unquestionable fact;—that, one positive assertion of Jesus, or of his apostles inspired, or informed by him, is sufficient to overthrow every objection which may be urged from the antecedent improbability of the fact, or from its contrariety to the general analogy of nature and course of events, an objection which is equally applicable to all other miracles;—that, it is gratuitous assumption to affirm that the only object of the mission of Christ was to teach the doctrine of a future life, a doctrine which was so generally acknowledged, and which is so easily proved by rational deduction, as almost to supersede the necessity of divine revelation for this purpose alone;—that, the

mind revolts at the idea of a human creature being appointed to the high office of raising the dead and judging the world, while the obvious propriety of assigning the offices of redeemer and judge to him who was the maker of the world, who supports and governs it, and who was the medium of all the moral dispensations of God to mankind, forms a strong presumptive argument in favour of the pre-existent state and dignity, and of the superior nature of Jesus Christ;—and finally, that this doctrine is so plainly revealed in the Scriptures, that although it may have been called in question by a few speculative or interested men at different periods, from very early times, it has nevertheless commanded the belief of the great body of professing christians from the first promulgation of the christian religion to the present day.

It is further objected, that it is very arbitrary and unwarrantable in the Unitarians to strike out of the Scriptures whatever they find in it which is inconsistent with their own principles and hypotheses, and which they cannot explain away, and particularly the history of the miraculous conception in Matthew and Luke;—that it is very derogatory from the respect and veneration which is due to Christ to represent

his character as liable to frailty and infirmity; to restrict his inspiration, and to charge him with prejudice and error;—that to deny the plenary inspiration of the apostles, and of the other writers of the New Testament, is to make revelation useless, by involving it in ambiguity and uncertainty;—and that as to the circumstance of saints being assessors with Christ in the high office of judging the world, both men and angels, whatever may be intended by these declarations, it is very evident from the slight and incidental manner in which one of these events is mentioned, and from the great solemnity and frequency with which the other is announced, that they are to be understood in different senses; and that in one case the expressions are to be taken literally, and in the other figuratively.

It is also represented as great arrogance in the advocates for the simple humanity of Jesus Christ to appropriate to themselves the title of Unitarians, an honourable name, to which it is contended that all christians have a just claim, the Trinitarians asserting a unity of essence in a trinity of persons; the highest Arians pleading that they contend for the existence of one God alone, from whom the Logos, who created and supports the universe, derives all his attri-

butes and powers, and in whom all the respect and homage which is paid to this divine person ultimately terminates; and the lower Arians vindicating their claim to the title of Unitarians, because though they admit that the world is made and governed by Christ, who was invested with power and authority for this purpose by the Father, yet they regard the Father as the sole object of all religious worship and homage.

The Unitarians reply, that though they do not contend for the infallibility of the primitive christians, they nevertheless think, that as it has been proved that a majority of the unlearned christians in the two first centuries were believers in the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, this fact forms a very strong presumption that such was the doctrine taught by the apostles. The believers in the christian religion could be under no temptation to derogate from the honour of their master, and we know that they had very strong inducements to magnify his rank and dignity beyond the limits of truth, the disciples of Christ having from the beginning been exposed to disgrace and ridicule, as the followers of a crucified Nazarene. It is also much more probable that learned and philoso-

phizing christians would introduce new and refined speculations concerning the person of Christ, than unlettered men in low circumstances, who commonly content themselves with plain facts, and adhere stiffly to old opinions.

That they reject with indignation the charge so often and so unjustly alleged, of mutilating or corrupting the Sacred Text in order to render it subservient to their views and principles: they affirm that their only aim is to distinguish the genuine text from apocryphal interpolation; and that whenever they mark a passage as spurious or doubtful, the grounds of their objection to it are fairly stated: and they are willing to rest the validity of their conclusion upon the evidence produced.

That they acknowledge that the Scriptures were written for the instruction of the illiterate as well as of the learned; and they believe that all which is essential either to doctrine or practice is sufficiently intelligible even to the meanest capacity:

That, nevertheless, there is a degree of obscurity necessarily attached to ancient writings, and that a phraseology which is familiar and perfectly intelligible in one age and

country, may be extremely ambiguous and obscure in another, where the habits of thinking and modes of expression may be very different:

That many of those passages upon which the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, of his superior nature, and of his voluntary incarnation, as it is called, is founded, were not intended to be readily understood even by the persons to whom they were immediately addressed; our Lord himself upon various occasions in his public discourses, and particularly in those recorded by John, adopting a mystical language in order to conceal his true meaning from the Jews, who accompanied him from secular and unworthy motives, to disgust them with his doctrine, and to drive them from his presence: and it is highly probable that the language of Jesus upon these occasions was understood by his disciples in a sense perfectly consistent with his proper humanity. The apostle Paul likewise, in his Epistles, frequently makes use of a highly figurative phraseology in order to insinuate a doctrine, *viz.* the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, which he did not always think it prudent to mention in direct and unequivocal terms, lest

he should give unnecessary offence. The truth of this observation is well known to all who are conversant with that apostle's writings:

That to object to an interpretation as unnatural and far-fetched, is only, in other words, to say that to the objectors the interpretation is unusual: for the meaning of language being perfectly arbitrary, a sense which may be very familiar, and appear perfectly natural, to one, may to another seem harsh and forced:

That the Unitarians deny that they are justly chargeable with attempting to wrest and to distort the sense of the Scriptures, in order to adapt them to their own system; but on the contrary they contend, and they produce evidence to prove, that, according to the rules of fair and liberal criticism, the sense in which they explain obscure and disputed texts is the true sense of the sacred writers. And though they readily admit that one positive unequivocal declaration either of Christ or his apostles authorized and instructed by him, would be sufficient to set aside all the presumptions arising from the antecedent improbability of the fact, that, nevertheless, this improbability is to them a reason why they are very slow in yielding assent to any evidence short of the most express and un-

questionable testimony, and why they are disposed to examine with the utmost rigour whatever is advanced in proof of a fact so unlikely, so unusual, so contrary to all analogy, and in their estimation of so little use. And they solemnly profess, that, after the most diligent and impartial inquiry, they can find no such explicit and unequivocal assertions of the pre-existence and deity of Christ, nor indeed any evidence whatsoever of these extraordinary doctrines:

That, notwithstanding all that may have been advanced by ancient or by modern writers to solve the difficulty, it still appears to the Unitarians utterly unaccountable that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who undertook to write every thing concerning the history and the doctrine of Jesus of which it was needful that his disciples should be informed, and the latter of whom has also written an account of the mission and doctrine of the apostles after their master's ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which they were fully instructed in the objects of their mission, should have omitted a fact so material, and so honourable to their master, as that of his superior nature and pre-existent state, if they had been acquainted with it; nor is it to be supposed that they would have concealed this

fact, from that unworthy timidity and disgraceful caution which the early ecclesiastical writers have imputed to them:

That the divinity, or even the pre-existence of Jesus Christ was the prevailing doctrine of the majority of christians for the first and second centuries, the Unitarians do not allow; and evidence of the contrary has been produced, which has not been, and which cannot be, invalidated. But they admit that these doctrines, together with other corruptions of the christian religion, were early taught by philosophic christians, who were ashamed of a crucified leader, and of the simple doctrine of christianity; and that they were gradually introduced, and have long prevailed in the church, and that they are now professed by a very great majority of christians. This fact, however, no more proves the truth of these doctrines, than it proves the truth of the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, which is to this day the creed of the majority of christians. And they hope that, as the christian religion has by the energy of truth purified itself from the gross corruptions of Popery, it will go on to clear itself from all remaining errors, till it is gradually brought back to that purity and simplicity with which

it first appeared in the world: and they regard it as the indispensable duty of every friend to christian truth and to human happiness, to contribute to the utmost of his power, by all prudent, just, and honourable means, to the removal of that rubbish by which the progress of the Gospel is so much impeded.

The Unitarians do not presume to say that God might not, if he had pleased, have revealed other doctrines to mankind by Jesus Christ besides that most important one of a future life. But they profess, that, after reading the New Testament with the greatest attention, this doctrine appears to be the one great object of the christian revelation, which is in this view most worthy of God, and most beneficial to men.

For how lightly soever some may regard the revelation of this doctrine, and how clearly soever they may imagine it to be inferred from the appearances of nature, it is well known that antecedently to the appearance of Jesus Christ the fashionable philosophy of the heathen world had rejected it altogether: that the few who professed to expect a future life supported their opinion by evidence the most irrelevant and unsatisfactory; that the vulgar, who were the firmest believers, entertained notions concern-

ing it the most gross and absurd; that the doctrine was seldom or never applied to any valuable moral purpose; and that even the Jews themselves formed very confused and contracted opinions concerning the rewards and punishments of a future life. Nor could this state of opinion well have been otherwise, considering that the future existence of man depends upon his resurrection from the dead; and consequently, that whatever arguments the phænomena of the moral world might suggest, upon which however the heathen philosophers laid little stress, they would be in a great measure counterbalanced by the improbability of a fact so contrary to experience and analogy as a resurrection from the grave. This is the objection which christianity is calculated to remove, and which it has in fact so completely obviated, that, whatever doubts or differences may have subsisted amongst christians concerning other articles of faith, none have ever called in question the doctrine of a future life.

The Unitarians, who regard Jesus Christ as the son of Joseph and Mary, do not consider this circumstance as in the least degree derogatory from his prophetical character, any more than it derogates from the character and mis-

sion of Moses, of Elijah, or of Isaiah, that these prophets were born in the natural way. Nor is the doctrine of the proper humanity of Christ at all implicated in the question concerning the miraculous conception.

They maintain that it no more derogates from the authority of Christ, than it does from that of Moses, that his inspiration should not extend beyond the proper objects of his mission, and that in other cases he should entertain the same opinions, and be liable to the same misconceptions, as his countrymen and those amongst whom he was educated. Also, that the character of Jesus should have been gradually formed to that high degree of dignity and excellence which is exhibited in his history, by the practice of virtue and by the discipline of his sufferings, is far more probable in itself, more agreeable to the language of the Scriptures, more honourable to Christ, and more useful as an example to his followers, than if he were by nature and necessity a perfectly holy and impeccable being, incapable of being influenced by temptation of any kind, and consequently in no respect similar to his followers, or capable of exhibiting to them a proper example of virtue in a state of probation.

With respect to the plenary inspiration of the

apostles and of the writers of the Old and New Testament, the Unitarians contend that it is a privilege to which they themselves never made any pretensions; that it is a fact which can never be proved; that to maintain this point is to derogate from the credibility of the sacred books, and to involve the defenders of it in inextricable difficulties, and even in palpable absurdities. And to the trite and frivolous objection,—that if all be not inspired it would be impossible to distinguish what is of divine authority from what is merely human,—it is sufficient to reply, that the difficulty is no greater than that of distinguishing out of a number of books equally pretending to divine authority, those which are inspired from those which are not so, which, nevertheless, the advocates for plenary inspiration profess themselves able to do by the exercise of their understanding in judging of evidence.

Further; to maintain that the office of judging the world is to be understood literally when attributed to Christ, and figuratively when attributed to his apostles and disciples, is a mere gratuitous distinction, unsupported by argument, and advanced, without any authority, solely for the purpose of getting rid of a difficulty.

In reply to the outcry which has of late years been raised against the advocates for the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, for having appropriated to themselves the honourable title of Unitarians, to the exclusion not only of Trinitarians, but even of the great body of the Arians, it may be observed, That the controversy is only about a name, and therefore not deserving of that warmth with which it has of late been conducted.—That the title was first given to the Socinians, when it was not regarded in so honourable a light as at present, and that custom has limited it almost universally to those who believe in the proper humanity of Christ.—That it is defined by modern Unitarians to signify those christians who do not ascribe to a created being attributes, works, or worship, which reason and revelation appropriate to God alone.—The Unitarians regard creation and providence as works of God, performed by his immediate act, without the intervention of any second or instrumental cause: This they believe to be the doctrine both of reason and of revelation.—They cannot therefore, consistently with these principles, apply the title of Unitarians to those christians who ascribe these divine works to Jesus Christ, though such persons may at the same

time, however inconsistently, decline addressing religious homage to the Lord their Maker.

Their Arian brethren ought not to be offended at this limitation of the title of Unitarian. For it is upon similar ground that the middle class of Arians deny it to the high Arians, who are worshipers of Christ, but who nevertheless contend for the proper unity of God: and these again deny it to the Trinitarians, who zealously maintain the unity of the Godhead, though distinguished by a trinity of persons[9].

SECTION II.

THE SOCINIAN SCHEME.

THE Socinians maintained that Jesus was a human being, at least that he had no existence previous to his miraculous conception. But they

[9] That Arians were not always so ambitious of passing muster with the Unitarians as they seem to be at present, will appear from the following extract of a letter, now in my possession, from a learned Arian, William Whiston, to another learned Arian, James Peirce, dated Cambridge, July 16, 1708: "Your letter a little surprised me, to find myself supposed to be a Socinian or UNITARIAN. I never was, nor am now, under the least temptation of such doctrines.—I hope you will do me the favour to be one of the examiners of my papers. Till which time you will do kindly to stop so false a report."

appear to have believed that his body was made of a substance superior to that of other men, that he might be capable of sustaining the glory of that state to which he was advanced after his resurrection.

They maintained, that after having been declared at his baptism to be the Messiah, he retired into the wilderness, where he was admitted to some peculiar intercourse with the Supreme Being, and was occasionally taken up into heaven, to be instructed in the nature and purposes of his mission, and in all that he was to do and to suffer in the discharge of it. And it is by this hypothesis that they explain all those texts in which mention is made of ascending into, or of descending from, heaven.

After having fulfilled his ministry, he was publicly crucified. The Socinians deny that the death of Christ is in any degree a satisfaction for sin; but they allow that he is said to expiate sin, inasmuch as by his death he acquired that universal empire which authorizes and enables him to deliver his faithful disciples from the punishment of sin. But every idea of compensation to divine justice they reject, as unworthy of the perfections of God, and contradictory to the plainest declarations of Scripture.

The Socinians believed, that Jesus Christ after his resurrection and ascension into heaven, was invested with universal and unlimited authority: that all mankind, the righteous and the wicked, the living and the dead, were made subject to his government; and that he was advanced to rule over angels of every order and degree, whether good or evil, and indeed over the whole created universe.

In consequence of this exaltation, and by the appointment of the Father, he is now become the proper object of religious worship and invocation, even of the very same kind of worship which is addressed to God himself; and that for this reason, as well as on account of the dignity and authority to which he was exalted, he is called God by the sacred writers.

The Socinians further taught, that at the final consummation of all things Jesus Christ would again return to raise the dead, to judge the world, to reward the virtuous with eternal life and happiness, and to consign the wicked to adequate punishment.

This denomination of christians flourished in Poland in the sixteenth century. They took their name from Lælius Socinus, a nobleman of Sienna in Italy, and from Faustus Socinus

his nephew, who were able and zealous advocates for the Socinian doctrine, and who, together with others equally zealous and enlightened, were very successful in spreading these tenets in Poland and Transylvania.

There was a great difference of opinion amongst the Socinians concerning the propriety of praying to Christ. Faustus Socinus strenuously maintained it, and declares them to be no christians who refuse to worship Christ, whatever profession they may make of believing in him. Francis David, a preacher of note in Transylvania, taught that Jesus was put to death by the Jews contrary to the intention of the divine Being, who meant that he should be their king; and that since his resurrection and ascension he is placed in a state in which he is totally unacquainted with every thing that passes in the world, and consequently that he cannot be the proper object of religious worship. Socinus was sent for to convince Francis David of his error; but, not being able to accomplish his purpose, and he still persisting to teach, both publicly and privately, that to worship Jesus Christ was exactly the same thing as worshiping the Virgin Mary and other saints, was thrown into prison by order of the prince

of Transylvania, where he died soon afterwards, a melancholy proof that persecution is not limited to any party. Socinus himself, though a great and good man, is not altogether clear from the suspicion of having been accessary to the sufferings of Francis David.

It was the uniform opinion of the Socinians, that the Holy Spirit was the energy of God exerted in the miraculous gifts and powers communicated to the apostles and primitive believers, and not a conscious intelligent agent, either created or divine.

Against the doctrine peculiar to the Socinians it has been objected, That the personal ascent of Jesus into heaven is not in itself probable, and is indeed founded upon the puerile supposition that heaven is a particular district of the universe where God resides and manifests his glory in a peculiar and sensible manner;—that, had this local ascent and descent been a literal fact, there can be no doubt that other evangelists would have mentioned it besides John, as they have related his temptation and his transfiguration;—that such a local ascent could be of no use, as the divine Being might have communicated the knowledge of his will to Jesus while he lived in this world, as easily and as

distinctly as if he had been transported to the remotest regions of the universe;—that the phrases 'ascending to,' and 'descending from, heaven,' as applied to Jesus, are peculiar to St. John, and that there is no great difficulty in explaining them in a mystical and figurative sense, like many other of the bold and metaphorical expressions which occur so frequently in the writings of that evangelist.

Also, that the advancement of a human being to the government of the whole created universe, exalting him above all the supposed orders of the celestial hierarchy, and making him the proper object of religious worship, and this for doing nothing more than any other human being, aided by the same power, might have done, is a fact, in its own nature, barely possible, and in its circumstances in the highest degree improbable, contrary to all experience and analogy, not to be admitted but upon the most explicit and irresistible evidence; and though not involving a contradiction so palpable as the Athanasian doctrine, it is nevertheless almost equally incredible, and would, if it were taught in the New Testament, constitute one of the strongest objections against the truth and divine authority of the christian religion.

These objections are so obvious, and of such weight, that the Socinian doctrine now is universally exploded, at least in this country.

The doctrines of the old Socinians are contained in the Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum; including the works of Faustus Socinus, Crellius, Slichtingius, and Wolzogenius: also, in those of Przipcovius, and Brenius. See also Dr. Toulmin's Life of Socinus.

SECTION III.

THE LOW ARIAN SCHEME.

THIS hypothesis maintains that the soul which animated the body of Jesus was a pre-existent spirit, but of what order or degree of the celestial hierarchy is not known. It is however denied that he had any concern in the formation of the world, or in the administration of providence antecedent to his supposed incarnation. It is maintained, that in consequence of his sufferings and death he is now advanced to

great personal dignity and authority, and that he will hereafter appear to raise the dead and to judge the world. The Low Arians in general deny that the death of Christ was a satisfaction for the sins of men; and some of them maintain that he died only as a martyr and an example, and that his death is an expiation for sin solely as being a means of virtue: while others use language upon this subject which seems to imply that this event had some mysterious design, and answered some purposes under the divine government which they do not, or cannot, explain.

They are unanimous in rejecting the worship of Christ, and the personal existence of the Holy Spirit.

This denomination of christians is in the strictest sense Unitarian: they ascribe neither attributes, nor works, nor honours to Christ, which reason and revelation appropriate to God; and they differ from other Unitarians solely, or chiefly, in assigning an earlier date to the existence of Jesus.

The Low Arian hypothesis is founded upon a literal acceptation of those texts in which Jesus is said to have descended from heaven, while, at the same time, a figurative sense is annexed

to those passages which are by the great body of christians understood to represent him as the creator, or former, the supporter and governor of the world, and the medium of all the moral dispensations of God to mankind.

This hypothesis is improperly called Arian, having no affinity with the true Arian scheme in any article but the comparatively unimportant one, of the pre-existence of Christ. In all other respects it coincides with proper Unitarianism. And to the title of Unitarians the advocates of simple pre-existence, however erroneous in this particular, have an unquestionable right.

This hypothesis has been embraced by many learned and respectable individuals; but it has not yet found a learned public advocate. The following are the principal objections against it:

1. That this doctrine is perfectly novel in the history of opinions concerning the person of Christ; it was never heard of before the eighteenth century.

2. The hypothesis itself is of no use, and therefore it is in theory incredible. A pompous miracle is supposed to be performed to introduce a spirit of a superior order into the world, to accomplish no purpose but what might, for

any thing that appears, have been equally well accomplished by a human being acting under a divine commission.

3. It seems very arbitrary and unreasonable to take those texts in a literal sense which speak of the descent of Jesus from heaven, and to give a figurative interpretation to those passages which, in language equally direct and explicit, represent him as the maker and governor of all things, and the medium of divine dispensations.

4. The phrase 'descending from heaven' was certainly in use at the time when the New Testament was written, to express the divine authority of a person or doctrine, (see Luke xx. 4;) and that the disciples of Christ understood it in this sense is evident from their not expressing any astonishment at the discovery of so extraordinary and unexpected a fact, as that of the superior nature and dignity of their Master, and from their having continued to converse with him after this supposed discovery upon the same terms of ease and familiarity as before.

5. The expression 'descending' or 'coming down from heaven,' even if it were to be understood literally, would not necessarily prove the

pre-existence of Christ, but might be explained either upon the principles of the Polish Socinians, who supposed that Christ was really taken up to heaven to be instructed in the duties of his office, or upon the hypothesis of some modern Unitarians, who have thought that Christ, like Paul, was favoured with a visionary scene, in which he imagined himself to be transported into paradise.

SECTION IV.

THE PROPER OR HIGH ARIAN HYPOTHESIS.

This hypothesis maintains that the Son of God, who is also called the Logos, is a creature made out of nothing, inferior to the Father, and in all respects dependent upon him and subject to him: that the Logos was the instrument of God, some say, in the creation of all things, others in the formation of this world from matter already created by God; some add, of this planetary system, and some, of all worlds and systems; and that he is the Maker of angels

and archangels, and of the whole material and intellectual universe.

But whether he performed these works by his own power, and according to the dictates of his own intellect and will, or whether he was merely the passive instrument of the Supreme Being, acting entirely under his direction in all things, is a question which does not seem to have been thoroughly examined and discussed, and concerning which no determinate opinion has been formed.

It is likewise maintained that to this great Being is delegated the administration of providence, that he upholds all things by the word of his power, and that by him all things consist, the whole created universe being sustained by his energy. Also, that he was the medium of the divine dispensations to the patriarchs and to the Jews, appearing, as most of the supporters of the Arian hypothesis assert, though some deny it, to Abraham and to his chosen descendants under the name and character of Jehovah, the angel and representative of the Supreme.

This glorious spirit is supposed to have animated the body of Christ; and it is asserted, that during his incarnation and personal resi-

dence in this world, his attributes were in a considerable degree quiescent or suspended: but it is not positively decided whether he retained the consciousness of having existed in a former and more exalted state, or whether he performed miracles by his own power, or at the suggestion and by the power of the Father; the advocates for this system being commonly inconsistent not only with each other, but with themselves, upon this subject, in consequence of not having paid sufficient attention to it, and of not having made up their minds about it.

The supporters of the Arian hypothesis maintain that Christ is with propriety called a man, as having been a spirit united to a human body; perceiving and acting by the medium of corporeal organs, agreeably to the usual definition of a human being, and to the familiar use of the word in various passages both of the Old Testament and the New.

This glorious spirit is represented as having descended into this world not solely to instruct men in moral and religious truth, and to excite them to virtuous practice; nor merely to reveal the doctrine of eternal life, and to exhibit a proof and pattern in his own person of a resurrection from the dead; but to accomplish cer-

tain purposes by his sufferings and death, which could not have been effected by the humiliation and sufferings of any inferior being. In this view the death of Christ is sometimes described by the advocates for this hypothesis as an atonement for sin, as a satisfaction to the justice of God, as an affecting exhibition of the evil and demerit of sin, and of the displeasure of God against it, or as a most highly meritorious act of filial obedience.

The Arians further maintain, that after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, he resumed the dignity and authority of which he had divested himself during the period of his incarnation, was reinstated in his office of governor of the world, and invested with the government of the church; that he now sustains the character of high-priest and intercessor; that he conducts the affairs of the world in subserviency to the interests of the church; that he exercises a special guardianship over every individual christian; that he reigns over the living and the dead; that at the appointed season he shall return to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to assign to the righteous and to the wicked their respective states of happiness or misery; and finally, that, after this

grand transaction, he is to resign the mediatorial kingdom to the Father.

Till lately, it was the uniform and, indeed, consistent doctrine of those who held the Arian hypothesis, that Christ is the proper object of adoration and invocation, and religious addresses to Jesus were not uncommon; but this practice seems now to be very generally abandoned.

Arian divines have usually been advocates for the proper personality of the Holy Spirit, who is commonly represented by them as inferior to the Son, but superior to all other creatures, and as acting in subordination to the Logos in the œconomy of redemption. But this doctrine is now very generally given up; and the Holy Spirit is regarded by almost all learned christians, who are not Trinitarians, merely as a divine energy.

The following are the principal arguments in favour of the proper Arian hypothesis:

That it is perfectly agreeable to the analogy of nature that one being should be made the instrument of communicating existence and happiness to other beings, and that God usually conducts his dispensations towards his creatures by the intervention of subordinate agents:

That it is expressly taught in the christian Scriptures that Christ existed with the Father before the world began; and particularly that it is affirmed of him, and of no other prophet, that he came down from heaven:

That there are many passages in the New Testament which teach that the Logos, the Son of God, was the Maker, the Supporter, the Governor, and the Redeemer of the world; that it is his office to administer the affairs of the church; and that he is appointed to raise the dead, and to judge all mankind according to their works:

That these great works and this high authority do not necessarily infer the supreme divinity of the author or possessor of them, is evident from the express declaration of Jesus, that his Father is greater than he; that he is inferior to the Father in knowledge, in power, and in goodness; also, that he is derived from, and is wholly dependent upon, the Supreme Being for his existence, and for all his powers:

That the doctrine which the Arians hold concerning the important design of the death of Christ, is confirmed by numerous passages in the Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, in which that event is represented as ful-

filling purposes under the divine government beyond that of any human being, and as being the great anti-type of the expiatory sacrifices of the Levitical law.

The Arians also observe, that titles and characters are ascribed to Christ; that regards are claimed by him, and homage is paid to him, which would be highly improper and unbecoming if he were only an exalted man:

That there was a peculiar propriety in appointing the same glorious person to be the redeemer of the world, and the final judge of all mankind, who was the original maker and governor of the world, and the medium of all the former dispensations of God to the human race. This supposed harmony of the divine dispensations is represented by the friends of the Arian hypothesis as a strong presumptive argument in its favour.

Finally, it is maintained, that the great dignity and authority of Jesus Christ on the one hand, and his derivation from, and entire dependence upon, the Father on the other, was the prevailing doctrine of the first and purest ages of the christian church.

The Arian hypothesis is opposed by the following objections.

That this hypothesis is equally inconsistent with the proper deity and the proper humanity of Jesus Christ; for the Maker of the world in a human form could not with propriety be called a man:

That if the Logos be the maker, supporter, and governor of the world, he must be supreme God; for there is but one former, preserver, and director of all:

That if the Logos is Jehovah, he must be the supreme Jehovah, for there is but one Jehovah:

That to admit two objects of religious worship, though the homage paid to one is called supreme, and that to the other subordinate, is wholly unauthorized and unscriptural, and is, properly speaking, polytheism and idolatry:

That it is more probable that the union of so exalted a spirit as the Logos with a human body would render the material system impassible and immortal, than that the attributes of the Logos would by such an union be degraded to a level with the faculties of other human beings:

That the Arian hypothesis excludes the divine being from almost all concern in the formation and government of the universe, and weakens the regards due to him from his creatures; while, on the other hand, it tends to fill

the mind with disquieting apprehensions, by representing the administration of the universe as in the hands of a being of limited wisdom, power, and benevolence:

That the Arian doctrine is vague and ambiguous; it being a matter of great doubt amongst the advocates for this hypothesis, whether the Logos made and governs the world by the exertion of his own uncontrolled will and power, or whether he acted by direction from, and in immediate subordination to, the Divine Being who supplied him with power for the occasion: whether in his incarnate state he retained any consciousness of his pre-existent glories; whether, and in what sense, and to what degree, his attributes were quiescent; whether he performed his miracles by his own or by his Father's power; and whether he raised himself to life. Also, in what way the preservation and government of the universe was conducted while its proper maker and governor was reduced to the state of a human being, and even of an infant:

That the doctrine of atonement and vicarious suffering, in every sense of it, and under every explanation, is irrational, unscriptural, and repugnant to the perfections of God:

That the Arian hypothesis is absolutely inconsistent with the Scripture account of the exaltation of Christ as the reward of his sufferings; the dignity and authority to which he is now advanced being no greater than what he originally possessed:

Moreover, that the doctrine of a created Logos is not the doctrine of the two first centuries: that it was first suggested at the latter end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century; and that, when first published, it excited general attention and alarm, and gave rise to a very long and vehement controversy. It cannot therefore be the doctrine of the Scriptures.

Against the hypothesis, that the Logos was the former but not the creator of the world, and which limits his energy and jurisdiction to this planet, or to the solar system only, and which denies him to be the proper object of religious worship, it has been objected:

That there is no foundation either in reason or Scripture for maintaining that the maker and governor of the world is a different person from him by whom matter was created:

That upon this hypothesis it may justly be asked, whether, if spirits are immaterial beings,

God was the creator of immaterial substance, and the Logos formed it into spirit:

That there is no appearance in nature which should lead us to conclude that the being who made this system is different from the being who made other systems; for that the created universe, as far as our observation extends, appears to be one grand, connected, harmonious whole; from the immense extent of which, and from the mutual relation and connexion of its various systems, and clusters of systems, according to the latest discoveries of Dr. Herschel, we are naturally led to infer the existence of one only omnipresent, intelligent, omnipotent, and governing will:

That those texts which are understood to ascribe to Christ the formation and government of the world, if they are to be interpreted literally, and as relating to the natural world, cannot reasonably be limited to any thing short of the whole created universe: for without him, it is said, was not any thing made that was made: All things were made by him and for him:

And lastly, that if Christ be the creator, supporter, and governor of this world only, continually present with us, acquainted with our wants, hearing our prayers, and able to

help us, he must of necessity be the proper object of our religious homage: he is "the Lord our Maker," whom we are required to worship; nor can it be more unreasonable to pray to Christ, than to ask a favour of any other friend who is present with us, or accessible to us[3].

SECTION V.

THE SEMI-ARIAN SCHEME.

This hypothesis maintains that the Son of God is the eternal voluntary production of the Father's power; that he derived his existence from the Supreme Being in an incomprehensible manner, different from and superior to all created existence; that he possesses all communicable attributes, and is equal to the Father himself in all things excepting necessary existence; that he is the delegate of God in the creation and government of the universe, and the medium of all the moral dispensations of God to mankind; that he appeared under the

[3] Whiston, Emlyn, Peirce, and Dr. Price were the learned and able advocates of Arianism in the last century.

name and character of Jehovah to the patriarchs, and gave out the law to Moses at mount Sinai: and finally, that it was this glorious spirit which animated the body of Jesus.

In favour of this hypothesis it has been alleged,

That the Scriptures ascribe all divine attributes to the Son, excepting self-existence, which is necessarily incommunicable.

That eternity itself is predicated of the Son; and that an eternal derivation of existence involves no contradiction. For if God has been eternally omnipotent, he might from eternity exercise the power he possesses. To deny this would be a contradiction in terms:

That the Logos is repeatedly and expressly called God, and is represented as the creator, preserver, and governor of all derived beings without exception. "Without him was not any thing made which was made:"

That he is every where represented as deriving his existence from, and acting in subordination to, the Father: That, nevertheless, he is never expressly called a creature, nor represented as having been made out of nothing; nor is it any where said that there was a time

when the Son did not exist, as the Arians positively teach:

It is particularly insisted upon, that he is called 'only-begotten,' which implies a mode of derivation peculiar to the Son, different from and far superior to the mode in which creatures in general are brought into existence.

Finally, it is strenuously insisted upon, that this doctrine was held by all the Anti-nicene fathers, who, while they earnestly plead for the pre-existence, voluntary derivation, and entire subordination of the Son, peremptorily deny him to be a created being, nor would they allow that there ever was a time when he did not exist. And indeed the great alarm which was universally excited when this doctrine was first published by Arius, proves almost to demonstration that the hypothesis of a Logos created out of nothing was perfectly novel, and unheard of before.

The principal and eminently learned advocates of this hypothesis of an eternally-derived but uncreated Logos, are Dr. Samuel Clarke the rector of St. James's, and Dr. Daniel Scott.

It is obvious to remark that this scheme is open to all the objections which may be urged

against the proper Arian hypothesis: besides that it involves many difficulties peculiar to itself.

The distinction between generation and creation, as acts of the divine power and will, and the very supposition of an intermediate mode of existence between a self-existent and a created being, is arbitrary, unintelligible, and unscriptural, not to say contradictory and absurd.

The title of Son, as applied to Christ, has no relation to the metaphysical mode of his existence: it was conferred upon him at his baptism, as a designation of his official character of Messiah.

The expression 'only-begotten' is peculiar to the evangelist John, who uses it in the same connexion, and no doubt in the same sense, in which the other evangelists use 'beloved;' which means nothing more than that Jesus was the chief of all the prophets of God, and highly favoured above all others by the extent of his authority and the superiority of his miraculous gifts and powers.

Lastly, the advocates of this hypothesis mistake the doctrine of the primitive ecclesiastical writers, who, though they never taught, nor even thought of, the creation of the Logos, did not regard this glorious person as a permanently

derived intelligent agent, distinct from the Father, but as an attribute of the Supreme Being, first occasionally, and afterwards permanently personified[1].

SECTION VI.

THE INDWELLING SCHEME.

This hypothesis represents the Logos as a created being. Dr. Watts seems to have regarded him as of the order of human spirits, but as having existed previously to the formation of the world; coinciding so far in opinion with the low Arians. Dr. Thomas Burnet and Dr. Doddridge assign to him the attributes and rank of the high Arian Logos, and represent him as the maker of the universe, and the medium of all divine communications.

In this Logos the Father is supposed to dwell by an intimate union, analogous to that of the soul and body; and in consequence of this union, or inhabitation of the Father, the attri-

[1] Priestley's Early Opinions, book ii. chap. 2.

butes and works of God may be predicated of the Logos, and divine honours are due to him.

This hypothesis is thought by its advocates to reconcile in the easiest and the most satisfactory manner the proper deity of Christ with the proper unity of God, as in this case the Son is God only by the Father's godhead.

It is also considered as the best means of reconciling the inferiority of the Son with his proper deity; because, upon this hypothesis, he possesses a created as well as a divine nature.

The Indwelling Scheme, as it is called by its advocates, is chiefly supported by those texts in which the miraculous works of Christ are ascribed to the power of the Father dwelling in him, John xiv. 9—11: which teach that he and the Father are one, John x. 30. But the principal stress is laid on Col. ii. 9, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*;" that is, say the advocates for this hypothesis, fully, really, and substantially; not in shadows and symbols, like the Shechinah, or cloud of glory upon the ark, but in his essence and person.

Of the advocates for this hypothesis, some, as Dr. Watts, deny the personality of the Holy Spirit; others, with Dr. Doddridge, believe the

Holy Spirit to be a created being, inferior to the Logos, but, like him, inhabited by the Deity, and therefore one with God.

This hypothesis seems to have been first advanced by Dr. Thomas Burnet, in the beginning of the eighteenth century: it was adopted and defended by Paul Maty, a Dutch divine, A. D. 1724; but it made little progress upon the continent. In England the indwelling scheme was supported by Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge, and was a favourite hypothesis with the disciples of that school: at present it has not many advocates.

The following are the principal objections against the indwelling scheme.

1. That, like the low Arian hypothesis, it is perfectly new, and was never heard of till the eighteenth century.

2. That it will by no means answer the purpose for which it is proposed and supported; namely, to reconcile the proper deity with the inferiority and proper humanity of Christ. For as the Son and Spirit were created beings, there was a time when they did not exist; consequently they are not eternal, therefore they are not divine.

3. The hypothesis itself, so far as it differs from Arianism, is reducible to an absurdity.

If by the indwelling deity be meant that the uncreated substance of the Supreme Being is so united with the created substance of the Logos, as to form one compound substance; and that the uncreated consciousness of deity is so united to the created consciousness of the Logos, as to form one consciousness only; so that the self-existent God and the created Logos united form one compound person, distinct both from God and the Logos;—though this doctrine does indeed secure the deity of the Son, it at the same time involves an absurdity too gross to be allowed by any considerate mind, and equal to any thing either in Athanasianism or in transubstantiation. But if by the inhabitation of deity in the Logos, nothing more be intended than that the will of the Son in all respects coincides with the will of the Father, that the doctrine which he taught was inspired by the Father, and that the miracles he performed were wrought by the power of the Father; or, in fine, any thing short of a personal substantial union with the Father;—this kind of indwelling is perfectly similar to that which all Arians, Socinians, and even Unitarians have always maintained, and is in fact giving up the deity of the Son and the Spirit.

SECTION VII.

THE SABELLIAN SCHEME.

THIS hypothesis assumes that Father, Son, and Spirit, are different names for the same being, the only living and true God; who, as Maker and Governor of the world, is called Father; as dwelling in the man Christ Jesus to authenticate his mission, to impart his doctrine and to perform his miracles, takes the name of Son; and as the inspirer of the apostles, the author of spiritual gifts, and the sanctifier and comforter of christians, is called the Holy Spirit.

This is said to have been the doctrine of Sabellius bishop of Pentapolis in Africa, also of Paul of Samosata bishop of Antioch, for which he was deposed in a council held at Antioch A. D. 269.

The epithet Sabellian being obnoxious, no person at present chooses to assume it: but it is evident that this doctrine differs only in words from proper Unitarianism, or from what is called Nominal Trinitarianism, as will be hereafter explained.

The Unitarians allow that God is often called the Father; and sometimes the Spirit of God is used for God himself. But the character of Son is never applied to the Supreme Being: it belongs eminently to Jesus as the Messiah, the first-begotten from the dead, the first of the human race who, in consequence of a resurrection from the grave, has been put into possession of the promised inheritance.

SECTION VIII.

THE SWEDENBORGIAN DOCTRINE.

This system maintains that there is but one God; that he existed from all eternity in a human form; that to accomplish the redemption of men and angels he assumed and animated a human body, and that his union to it became perfect by means of trials and conflicts; that the trinity commenced at the incarnation, God himself being the Father, the human body the Son, the joint operation of both the Holy Spirit. Christ suffered to redeem the world from the power of evil angels. The Swedenborgians be-

lieve that the last judgement took place, in the spiritual world, A. D. 1757, and that the spiritual kingdom of Christ commenced on the 19th of June 1770.

They deny the doctrine of the resurrection in its literal sense, and believe that men, when they die, enter upon the spiritual world, and are clothed with a vehicle which they call substantial, in opposition to material. They imagine that the spiritual world so nearly resembles the present state, that it can with difficulty be distinguished from it. The inhabitants eat and drink, and marry; they have houses, palaces, and cities; they carry on trade and commerce; they possess gold, silver and jewels, books, writings, and the like: but every thing is in a more perfect state than in the material world.

They also maintain that the whole Scripture, excepting the Book of Acts and the Epistles, have a twofold meaning, the natural and the spiritual: this they call the doctrine of correspondences: and they believe that the spiritual meaning was never understood till it was revealed to Emanuel Swedenborg.

This strange doctrine was the reverie of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish baron, who was born A. D. 1689, and died 1772. It is said to

have been embraced by great numbers of persons upon the continent, and some of very high rank: but in this country, where freedom of discussion is allowed, it can hardly be expected to make many proselytes. The Swedenborgians call themselves the New Jerusalem Church.

As the truth of this system depends upon the inspiration of Emanuel Swedenborg, who appears to have been an honest visionary, who fancied that he was indulged with occasional intercourse with the spiritual world, it is needless to enter into any argument upon the subject[1].

SECTION IX.

TRITHEISM.

THIS is the doctrine of three equal independent infinite beings, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is so diametrically opposite to the doctrine of the divine Unity so explicitly taught in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and even to the dictates of right reason upon this impor-

[1] See Dr. Priestley's Letters to the New Jerusalem Church; and Proud and Hindmarsh's Replies to Priestley: also Swedenborg's Universal Theology, No. 734.

tant subject, that however near the doctrine of the Realist Trinitarians may be thought to approximate to it, Tritheism is expressly disavowed by almost all modern writers upon the subject. It is said to have been maintained by John Ascunage a Syrian philosopher of the sixth century, and to have been supported by John Philoponus a grammarian of high reputation in Alexandria.

SECTION X.

TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE.

The doctrine of the Trinity maintains that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, three equal persons in the same divine substance, and yet there are not three Gods but one God: or, in other words, that "there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

The following is a general view of the arguments in favour of this doctrine.

1. That Christ is expressly called God both in the Old Testament and the New.

2. That he appeared to the patriarchs under the name and character of Jehovah.

3. That titles appropriated to the Supreme Being are applied to Christ, *viz.* Lord, Lord of Hosts, Lord of All, King of kings and Lord of lords, Alpha and Omega, First and Last, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

4. That of Christ it is explicitly declared that he was in the beginning with God, and was God; that in him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, that is, substantially; that he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, or as God; that he and the Father are one; and that he is in a peculiar and appropriate sense the Son of God, well-beloved, and only-begotten.

5. That attributes appropriate to the Supreme Being are ascribed to Christ, *viz.* eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability.

6. That divine works are also ascribed to Christ, *viz.* the creation, the support, and government of the world, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgement of all mankind.

7. That divine honours are challenged by

him, and divine worship addressed to him; that he is represented as the proper object of prayer, of thanksgiving, of obedience, of trust, of self-dedication, and of joy: also, that he is joined with the Father in acts of social worship and invocation, and in the doxologies of the heavenly world.

8. That the apostles uniformly address him, and speak to him, and of him, under the impression of his proper deity.

9. That the true and proper deity of Christ has been the doctrine of the christian church from the earliest age, which, with the exception of a very small number of individuals, has been uniform and unanimous in its profession of this faith.

Against this doctrine it has been objected.

1. That if the Son and Spirit be each of them truly and properly God, there must be more Gods than one; for it is a contradiction in terms to say, that there are three distinct, intelligent, conscious agents, each of which is truly God, and yet that there is but one God.

2. That the proper deity of Christ is absolutely inconsistent with his proper humanity. It is impossible that God should become incarnate, and suffer, and die: It is equally impos-

sible that he should so unite himself to a human soul, as to become one conscious person or intelligent agent with it. But if the consciousness remains distinct, they are, properly speaking, two distinct persons: and Jesus Christ, who appeared in a human body as the instructor of mankind, who suffered and died upon the cross, and who was raised again to life, was in no proper sense God, but a mere man; so that this doctrine, so far, coincides with the proper Unitarian scheme, and is inconsistent with the commonly-received opinion concerning the atonement of Christ, and the satisfaction made to the justice of God.

3. That to maintain concerning propositions which relate to the same individual person Christ, that some are to be understood of his human nature only, some of his divine nature alone, and some of his complex person as God-man, is a mode of interpretation which the Scriptures neither teach nor warrant, which is contrary to every rule of sober and rational criticism, and which tends to convert plain language into unintelligible jargon.

4. If Jesus is ever spoken of as God either in the Old Testament or in the New, which some deny, it must be in the same sense in

which Moses is said to have been a God to Pharaoh, and in which prophets and magistrates are also called gods, that is, either as possessing authority, or as acting under a divine commission, or as working miracles.

5. That Christ is in no instance styled Jehovah: that all arguments in proof of the ascription of this title to him are fallacious in the extreme: and that there is but one Jehovah, the true God, the only proper object of worship, who never gave his name or his glory to another.

6. That the few passages in which the creation of all things is ascribed to Christ, are to be interpreted of the moral world, and of the new creation, that new state and order of things which was introduced by Christ.

7. The Unity, or equality of Christ with God, is inconsistent with his exaltation as the reward of his obedience and sufferings.

8. The inferiority of Christ to the Father, the limitation of his attributes, the derivation of his commission and of all his miraculous powers from him, and his unlimited subjection to him, are taught in the most direct and unqualified terms by Christ himself. The apostles of Christ also uniformly teach his inferiority to the Father; and even after his resurrection and

ascension they speak of him as a man, without giving the least intimation that he also possessed a superior and divine nature, or taking the least pains to guard against being mistaken, though it is acknowledged that the mass of believers at that time were strongly prejudiced against the doctrine of the divinity of Christ.

9. The principal arguments of the Trinitarians are founded upon mistranslations, misinterpretations, or corruptions of the Scripture. The famous text of the heavenly witnesses, 1 John v. 7, is a palpable forgery; and the expression '*God* manifest in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 16, is very suspicious. 'That he thought it no robbery to be *equal with* God,' Phil. ii. 6, is a gross mistranslation: and the unity which subsists between the Father and him is explained by himself to be the same which subsists between him and his disciples, John xvii. 22. If the fulness of the Godhead dwell in him, his disciples and believers in general are said to be filled with the fulness of Christ and of God.—At any rate, whatever may be meant by the fulness of Godhead dwelling in Christ, it was no more than what "it pleased the Father should dwell in him."

10. If the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same being, there is no equality; if they are distinct, equal, co-ordinate persons, there is no proper unity.

11. The conduct of the apostles, and the familiarity of the behaviour of the companions of Christ, during his personal ministry, plainly prove that they had no conception of the divinity of his nature; nor do their history or their writings contain any indication of the astonishment which they could not but have felt when this amazing fact was first disclosed to them.

12. The Jews, the inveterate enemies of christianity, never charge the apostles or their immediate successors with introducing an idolatrous religion, though it is well known that this charge was urged with great vehemence by them as soon as the doctrine of the deity of Christ was advanced in the christian church; and that the commonly-received doctrine of the Trinity is to this day one of the principal sources of the animosity, hatred, and contempt which the Jews, the zealous advocates of the divine unity, express against the christian religion.

13. Christ is not represented in the Scriptures as the proper object of religious worship. He never requires it. He even expressly prohibits religious invocation of himself, John xvi. 23. Nor is there any proper example to authorize religious addresses to him.

14. It is strenuously maintained that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was not known in the apostolic age: that it was never admitted at all amongst the Jewish christians; and that it made very slow progress even amongst the Gentile believers; so that in the time of Tertullian, and even of Athanasius, a great majority of unlearned christians were Unitarians: that the doctrine of the personification of the Logos was first introduced by the Platonic philosophers who embraced christianity, and who were ashamed of the simplicity of the doctrine of the Gospel, and of the meanness and sufferings of its author; also, that the equality of the Son was not generally admitted till after the Council of Nice, nor the personality and equality of the Holy Spirit, till the fifth century.

Finally: The same mode of reasoning which is adopted to prove the doctrine of the Trinity

is equally applicable to that of transubstantiation; a few figurative expressions, literally interpreted, appearing to favour the doctrine, and the majority of believers having for many centuries received it. And if Trinitarians plead that their doctrine is a sublime mystery, to be received and adored, but not examined, this is no more than the plea of the Catholic in behalf of his incomprehensible mystery of transubstantiation[1].

To obviate the objections against the popular doctrine of the Trinity, various hypotheses have been advanced by the advocates for that doctrine, who are all reputed to agree in the same fundamental principle, and who do in fact agree in the use of the same language with respect to the person of Christ. The principal of these hypotheses are those of the Realists, of the Nominalists, and of the genuine Athanasians; to which may be added, the case of those

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[1] "Il y a bien de lieu de s'étonner, que des gens qui reconnoissent les mystères de la Trinité et de l'Incarnation refusent de reconnoître la présence réelle, et la Transubstantiation, puisqu'on peut former de plus grandes difficultés contre les premiers que contre le dernier, si l'on veut suivre les sens et la raison seulement." Lettres Choisies de M. Simon, p. 42.

who, professing to believe the doctrine of the Trinity, adhere chiefly to the language of Scripture, and decline all explanation upon the subject.

I. *The Realists.*

These writers maintain that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct, conscious, intelligent agents or persons; that the Son and the Spirit derive their existence from the Father by eternal necessary emanation, called generation as it respects the Son, and procession in reference to the Holy Spirit; and that with the single exception of self-existence, in regard to which the Father is called the Root and Fountain of Deity, and is superior both to the Son and the Spirit even as to their divine nature, they are in all respects independent of him, and equal to him, being necessarily-existent, and absolutely perfect.

The distinct personality, together with the proper equality, and œconomical subordination of the Son and Spirit, are supposed to be maintained with peculiar advantage by this hypothesis: and the Unity of the deity is thought to be sufficiently preserved by the supremacy of the Father, and the derivation of the Son

and Spirit from the substance of the Father, by communication of the same essence.

Some of the principal supporters of this doctrine amongst the English divines, are, Cudworth, Owen, Howe, Bull, Sherlock, Waterland, and Horsley.

To this hypothesis it is objected,

1. That if the three persons are in all respects equal, and all absolutely perfect, they are three gods; and that this hypothesis is downright Tritheism.

2. That if one be supreme, and the others subordinate, if one be self-existent and the others derived, the Son and Spirit cannot be absolute in all perfections; and therefore, in this view of the hypothesis, they cannot each be truly God.

3. Hence it follows that the hypothesis of the Realists, being in one view inconsistent with the unity of God, and in another view with the full equality and proper deity of the persons, is inconsistent with itself and with the Scriptures, and therefore cannot be true.

4. Besides the absurdity of supposing an absolutely perfect being to have been in any sense derived, whether by necessity or by a voluntary

act, the very notion of the peculiar and distinct modes of the emanation of the Son and Spirit, the former by generation, the latter by procession or spiration, whether from the Father only, as is taught by the Greek church, or from the Father and the Son, as the Latin church inculcates, is unintelligible and unscriptural.

II. *The Nominalists.*

These writers maintain that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinctions in the one self-existent Deity, analogous to the faculties of understanding, will, and power in men; to which three distinctions personal terms may be applied[2].

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[2] Dr. Wallis, Savilian professor of mathematics at Oxford, in his Considerations on the Trinity, p. 7, (1693,) speaks of it as "a silly mistake, that a divine person is as much as to say a divinity, or a God, when indeed a divine person is only a *mode, or respect,* or *relation* of God to his creatures. He bears to his creatures these three relations, modes, or respects; that he is their Creator, their Redeemer, their Sanctifier: this is what we mean, and all that we mean, when we say God is three persons. He hath those three relations to his creatures; and is thereby no more three Gods, than he was three Gods to the Jews because he calls himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

This truly Unitarian doctrine received the marked approbation of the University of Oxford, while Dr. Sherlock's hypothesis,

The principal advantage claimed by this hypothesis is, that it preserves the proper Unity of God, while it maintains the divinity and equality of each of the three persons.

Amongst the ancients, Augustin, the celebrated bishop of Hippo in Africa, was an advocate for this hypothesis; and amongst the moderns, Calvin, Hooker, Burnet, Wallis, South, Baxter, and others.

Against this hypothesis it is objected,

1. That if by distinctions or persons attributes only are meant, the term *person* is used in a sense very different from that which custom has established, and in a manner which must necessarily deceive those who are not upon their guard against this unprecedented abuse of language.

2. This hypothesis, in fact, annihilates the proper personality, and thereby the real existence of the Son and Spirit; and though the advocates of this hypothesis hold the language of proper Trinitarians, yet, in ideas, they coincide

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"that the three persons of the Trinity were three distinct infinite minds," underwent a public censure. With this modal hypothesis Mr. Lindsey satisfied himself to remain in the church and to use the liturgy, some years after he became a Unitarian. Apol. p. 228.

altogether with the Sabellians, or even with the proper Unitarians.

3. This hypothesis converts a great part of the language of the New Testament into unintelligible jargon. Thus, when it is said that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, it is the same as saying that one attribute or distinction of the Deity sent another attribute or distinction of the Deity to be the Saviour of the world. And when the Son prayed to the Father, one attribute or distinction of the divine nature prayed to another attribute or distinction of the divine nature.

4. If it should be maintained that the three persons in the Godhead are three distinctions, or, as some have expressed themselves, three *somewhats* that are not to be understood or explained, this is substituting words instead of ideas, and is in fact little better than giving up the question.

III. *The proper Athanasian Scheme.*

This hypothesis maintains that there are three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; the two latter eternal and necessary emanations from the Father; the Son

by generation, the Holy Spirit by procession; that they are in all other respects equal to each other, but united together by a mutual penetration of each other's substance, which is called Emperichoresis, or Circumincession. See Ben Mordecai's Letters, p. 999.

This was the doctrine of Athanasius himself, and of the Nicene fathers amongst the ancients, and of Bishop Bull amongst the moderns. It is supposed by its advocates to possess all the advantages of the doctrine of the Realists; while, by the peculiar hypothesis of the Emperichoresis, it precludes the charge of Tritheism.

It is a great objection against this scheme, that the emperichoresis, or mutual penetration of the divine substances, which is the grand peculiarity of it, is unfounded both in reason and in revelation, and is absolutely unintelligible.

If the hypothesis means to assert the existence of three absolutely perfect beings, whose knowledge, power, and will uniformly coincide, and who occupy the same infinite space, it is open to the celebrated objection of Locke and Wollaston against a plurality of infinite beings:

for two or more such beings cannot even in idea be separated or distinguished from one being. Their existence therefore can be of no use: it can account for no phænomena, and is utterly incredible and absurd.

It is well known that what is called the Athanasian creed does not express the doctrine of Athanasius himself, and is a forgery of much later date.

From a comparison of the preceding schemes it is obvious to remark:

1. That however the advocates of the Real and Nominal systems may agree in the use of the same language, their ideas are in fact as widely distant as those of the Unitarians and the Tritheists; one party maintaining that there is but one God, whose three attributes are called by different names, or who himself bears different names when acting under different relations; the other party affirming the existence of three distinct infinite minds, participating of the same nature and substance, equal in power and glory.

2. The doctrine of the Trinity in every shape and under every explanation is utterly incre-

dible; and the admission of it among christians as an article of belief, and a revealed truth, is to rational unbelievers a great objection against the divine origin of christianity, and one of the greatest impediments to its progress in the world.

The Jews, the Mahometans, and all serious believers in the Unity of God, regard the doctrine of the Trinity with abhorrence, as an infringement upon the most fundamental article of natural religion.

The nice distinctions, the metaphysical subtilties, and the scholastic jargon, which have been introduced into the Trinitarian controversy, naturally lead unbelievers to conclude that christianity is a system of abstruse speculation rather than of useful practical truth; and therefore that it cannot be of divine original.

Further: Intelligent unbelievers, and men of no religion, when they observe that persons, whose real sentiments are so directly opposite to each other, as those of the Realists and Nominalists, can nevertheless agree in the use of the same ambiguous language to impose upon the simplicity of unlearned christians, are easily

led to conclude that the teachers of christianity are not themselves believers in its divine authority, but that they profess it as a craft to maintain themselves at the expense of their deluded followers.

Hence it may naturally be expected that mere statesmen, who are indifferent to all religions, will conclude that christianity, like other superstitions, may be usefully employed as an engine of state; by a hypocritical profession of which, and a liberal support of a class of persons who shall be authorized to teach the creed of the state, they may maintain a great political ascendancy over the minds of the ignorant and superstitious vulgar.

Hence likewise, regarding all teachers of religion as hypocrites or enthusiasts, they are disposed to oppress and persecute those who, animated with a truly christian zeal to restore the religion of Jesus to its primitive purity, enter their public and solemn protest against prevailing and established errors, and to inflict pains and penalties upon such persons, as disturbers of the public peace: thus fixing upon the christian religion the stigma of persecution, which is most opposite to its true nature, and exciting still

more strongly the prejudices of unbelievers against it.

3. From these considerations, and upon these principles, the Unitarians justify their exertions to detect the corruptions of the christian doctrine, and to represent christianity in its true light, as the revelation of a future life of reward and punishment, confirmed by the resurrection of Christ from the dead: a doctrine of the greatest practical importance, and in the reception of which all christians are agreed. And till this reformation is accomplished, they have little hope that the christian revelation will meet with general reception, or that any considerable moral advantage is to be expected from those abstruse, complicated, and unintelligible systems of faith which often assume the name of christianity, and of which the genuine doctrine of Christ commonly constitutes a very limited proportion.

IV. To avoid the difficulties attending all explanations of the doctrine of the Trinity, a fourth class of professed Trinitarians have contented themselves with adopting, as they say, "Scripture language," at the same time declining all explanation of the subject.

They content themselves with observing, that the Scripture teaches that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each of them truly God; divine names, titles, and attributes, works, and worship being ascribed to each. They observe also, that the same Scripture likewise teaches that there is but one God: each of these positions, therefore, must be in some sense true. But in what sense the divine persons are three, and in what respect they are one, is not explained; it is therefore, say they, presumption in any one to attempt it: and being a doctrine of pure revelation, it ought to be left in the simplicity and obscurity of the Scripture language. This hypothesis, therefore, affirms that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. But it leaves it doubtful whether the personality of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit be a real or a modal personality; that is, whether the three persons be three distinct intelligent agents, or three modes, attributes, relations or distinctions of the same intelligent Being.

Where nothing is affirmed, nothing can be denied: but it may behove the advocates for

the use of this ambiguous and unmeaning phraseology to consider,

1. Whether they can seriously maintain that there is any medium between the Real and the Nominal schemes: in other words, whether they are not under a necessity of admitting that the three persons in the Trinity either are, or, are not, three distinct intelligent agents.

2. Whether they can seriously believe that the Scriptures have left it a matter of doubt whether there be three equal intelligent beings, all of whom are the proper objects of worship, or whether one Being alone is revealed as the object of religious adoration, by whatever names or characters he may be described.

3. Whether they are themselves seriously in doubt concerning the Scripture doctrine upon this subject; and whether this doubt arises from the obscurity of the Scriptures, or from their own voluntary inattention to the subject, and their unwillingness to take sufficient pains to gain satisfaction upon a subject of such high importance.

4. Whether it be not a concern of the greatest magnitude, and well deserving the

most serious inquiry, to determine whether the object of religious worship be one, or three, infinite beings.

5. Whether it be a mark of real respect to the Scriptures to use their language without ascertaining its meaning; and whether this be not the way to keep themselves and others in perpetual ignorance: also, whether they must not allow that it is the proper province of reason to investigate the true sense of the Scriptures.

6. Whether the indisposition to inquire and to attain clear and definite ideas upon a subject of such great and acknowledged importance as the doctrine of the Trinity, does not in some measure arise from an unworthy fear of the result of these inquiries, and from a secret suspicion that the question will not bear examination.

7. Let it also be very seriously considered, whether the common use of ambiguous language, which will necessarily lead plain and unlearned christians to conclude that there are THREE objects of religious worship, while the person who uses such language is himself persuaded that there is, or at least that there may

be, only ONE, be consistent with the true simplicity of the christian character; and whether it does not justly expose the person who uses it to the charge of "handling the word of God deceitfully."

THE END.

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